

GENERAL GRANT'S LAST STAND

HORACE GREEN

92 G7637gt

Keep Your Card in This Pocket

Books will be issued only on presentation of proper library cards.

Unless labeled otherwise, books may be retained for four weeks. Borrowers finding books marked, defaced or mutilated are expected to report same at library desk; otherwise the last borrower will be held responsible for all imperfections discovered.

The card holder is responsible for all books drawn on this card.

Penalty for over-due books 2c a day plus cost of notices.

Lost cards and change of residence must be reported promptly.



Public Library
Kansas City, Mo.

Keep Your Card in This Pocket

BERKOWITZ ENVELOPE CO., K. C., MO.

KANSAS CITY, MO. PUBLIC LIBRARY



A standard linear barcode is positioned horizontally across the page. It consists of vertical black bars of varying widths on a white background. Above the barcode, the text "KANSAS CITY, MO. PUBLIC LIBRARY" is printed in a small, sans-serif font. Below the barcode, the number "0 0001 0400295 1" is printed in a larger, bold, sans-serif font.

0 0001 0400295 1

GENERAL GRANT'S LAST STAND

BY HORACE GREEN

The Log of a Non-Combatant

The Life of Calvin Coolidge

American Problems, by Wm. E. Borah
(EDITOR)

General Grant's Last Stand



GENERAL ULYSSES S. GRANT

Enlargement of a negative made by Brady in Washington, probably in 1864.
Original in possession of F. H. Meserve

GENERAL GRANT'S LAST STAND

A Biography

BY

HORACE GREEN

*Illustrated by Facsimiles of Letters and
Family Portraits*

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS · NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS · LTD · LONDON

1936

COPYRIGHT, 1936, BY
HORACE GREEN

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in
any form without the permission of Charles Scribner's Sons*

A



CONTENTS

PREFACE	Long Council for Short Campaign	PAGE xi
---------	---------------------------------	------------

PART ONE

CHAPTER		
I	The Saddle Back of Time	3
II	Beginning of the Memoirs	11
III	A Note to Doctor Douglas — West Point — Mexico	16
IV	Resignation	24
V	Clear the Mississippi !	32
VI	Fort Donelson and Grant's Purse	36
VII	The Depths at Shiloh	47
VIII	In Disgrace — Sherman Stretches a Hand	60
IX	The Heights at Vicksburg	65
X	Interlude	76
XI	A New Letter About Lincoln	89
XII	The Heights at Chattanooga	97
XIII	The Warrior at Death's Door	106
XIV	The Battle of the Wilderness	121

Contents

PART TWO

CHAPTER		PAGE
xv	Disaster at Cold Harbor	135
xvi	Crossing the James River	144
xvii	The Winter of Discontent	153
xviii	All Quiet at City Point	165
xix	Some Personal Anecdotes	170
xx	Lincoln's "Little Rumpus"	179
xxi	Two Men	187
xxii	Five Forks	190
xxiii	Surrender of Lee	204
xxiv	Appomattox	214

PART THREE

xxv	Grant's Would-Be Assassinator	225
xxvi	"The Sight Was Varied and Grand"	230
xxvii	A Question of Veracity	238
xxviii	Only a President	245
xxix	The Principle of International Arbitration	249

Contents

CHAPTER		PAGE
xxx	Black Friday	255
xxxI	A Job Without a Future	263
xxxII	Treasures Upon Earth	268
xxxIII	Man Proposes	276
xxxIV	John Hancock Douglas, M.D.	282
xxxV	Mark Twain as a Publisher	289
xxxVI	Writing Against Time	295
xxxVII	Slips of Paper	303
xxxVIII	Mount McGregor	307
xxxIX	General Grant's Last Stand	314
INDEX		329

Acknowledgment is hereby gratefully made to the following publishers for the privilege of quoting:

For permission from, and arrangement with Houghton, Mifflin & Co. for the use of passages from *The Life of Ulysses S. Grant*, by Louis A. Coolidge.

For permission from, and arrangement with J. B. Lippincott & Co. for the use of passages from *The True Ulysses S. Grant*, by General Charles King.

For permission from, and arrangement with D. Appleton-Century Company, for the use of passages from *Campaigning with Grant*, by Horace Porter.

ILLUSTRATIONS

FACSIMILES

A famous five-page letter from Grant to Doctor Douglas <i>between pp. xii and xiii</i>	
Letter in which Grant outlines fatalistic beliefs	PAGE 17
Grant announces General Buckner's visit	23
"A verb is anything that signifies to be; to do; or to suffer"	47
Note to Doctor Douglas on what Grant thought of Lincoln	89
Page from Doctor Douglas's diary describing night when Grant nearly died	111
Grant states that glasses were never of much use in battle	126
"I said I had been adding to my book and to my coffin"	306
Grant analyzes his case. "I do not want any physician but yourself"	311
Grant criticizes a dispatch in the newspaper	315
"I must avoid such afternoons as this"	317
Grant predicts within one day the end of his work — and of himself	320
States that the memoirs are his own work	321

Illustrations

MAPS

	PAGE
March route of Wallace and Nelson after Johnston's attack at Shiloh	54
Vicksburg campaign	73
Map of the battle-field of Chattanooga	98
Richmond, Petersburg and Five Forks	191

ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Frontispiece</i>	FACING PAGE
General Ulysses S. Grant		12
Birthplace of General U. S. Grant		13
Father and mother of General Grant		13
Grant as Captain while stationed at Sackett's Harbor, N. Y., 1849, age 27		66
Grant after Vicksburg campaign		67
Grant, Fred D. Grant, and Mrs. Grant, City Point		166
Grant and his staff		167
John Hancock Douglas, M.D.		284
June 19, 1885, at Mt. McGregor		285
"Your little girls and mine"		308
Last photograph of General Grant		309
General Grant at work on porch at Mt. McGregor		318
The view from which General Grant derived strength		319

PREFACE

Long Council for Short Campaign

WHEN so many well-equipped writers have dug deep to the roots of General Grant, America's great soldier, or have laid Grant wide open as being far from America's greatest statesman, or have deprecated Grant's judgment as an even lesser private citizen, an attempt at this late day to add new colors to the portrait requires a fair amount of ego. Publishers, however, favor amendments to the Grant constitution. Obviously this volume does not pretend to be a definitive life of Grant, since in many phases a general knowledge of Grant's threefold career is assumed; and, in spite of the popularity of bulky manuscripts, the author has been governed by the rule of condensation, rather than by the prevalent mania for elaboration.

In writing reviews, and in reading practically all the Grant literature on record, I have suspected a lack of appreciation by some historians of what lay behind Grant's "iron reserve," his alleged lack of emotion, and his further alleged thick-skinned imperturbability. It seemed to me:—

That a man who could carry on a slip of paper tracings of his youngster's hand, and secretly exhibit them to his cronies at a lonely army post at Humboldt Bay, fourteen miles from Portland on the Oregon coast; a man who would spend the first night of the Battle of Shiloh sitting

Preface

under a tree in the rain rather than go to a field shelter, because, in his own words, “the sight was more unendurable than encountering the enemy’s fire”; a man who, toward the end, would write farewell messages to his wife and pin them to his clothing; who would deliberately kill himself in a race to pay creditors and to provide a rich competence for the family he had already served so well; — it seemed that this man must have a deep fund of reserve characteristics, consciously held in check, and not generally associated with the so-called mathematical butcher of Cold Harbor. It seemed to me furthermore that such a man, though perhaps lacking in political subtlety and evasiveness, must have been more sensitive to current thoughts than generally supposed.

In spite of the fact that General Grant was personally drab; although he avoided spectacular acts as much as Calvin Coolidge avoided conversation, his plunges up and down the ladder were more spectacular than Napoleon’s, and his career as weird as Lincoln’s. Consider the mere fact that at the age of 60 he was once more in comparative security; that at the age of 63 he lost, by one stroke, about \$350,000; that in the last eight months of life, by his pen alone, he earned a royalty of \$450,000!

The feeling that some quality in Grant had been overlooked, or at least underestimated, was intensified by reading *The Personal Memoirs of General Grant* written by the stricken soldier during the last few months of his life, and especially in reading them in conjunction with the new material placed in my possession. To me the memoirs always had a particular fascination even before I knew the circumstances of their creation. I recall resent-

Mr. I ask you not to show this to anyone, under no consideration, you can well write, until the end. Particularly I want it kept from my family. If known to even your dependents, as regards it, it would bring trouble to me. It would involve other members of my family and friends in trouble, & it would bring me trouble.

I have not changed my mind considerably since I wrote you last, & in view of our discussions of the subject, I know that I am right.

So far so good. But when I do go back it is beyond where I started to Washington. I think the chances are very decidedly in favor of your being able to keep me alive until the change of weather towards

First and fifth pages of a remarkable letter from Grant asking his physician "not to show this to anyone." The letter (given in full in Chapter XXXIX) gives

—(See other side)

15

Very dear Grat & Anna
I write to you and Son
of you & Debrepot, my
indebtedness for having found
you through the Valley of the
shadow of death so problem
me to witness these things.

W. H. Brown

W. H. Brown M.D.
July 2^d 1885.

thanks for harmony between those recently in conflict, and acknowledges "my indebtedness for bringing me through the valley of the shadow of death to enable me to witness these things"

Preface

ing the statement of one biographer (who shall be nameless since his work is admirable in many other respects) that Grant's autobiography "read as if it had been written by a very sick man." To me an appealing point of the memoirs is that no trace of Grant's suffering is found in the text. Nor was I impressed by Mark Twain's effervescent assertion in his otherwise delightful diary, that the General could never have used a flower of speech such as "The Shadow of the Valley of Death," when I had in my possession a letter in Grant's own handwriting in which, strange as it may seem, and with due deference to the shades of "Huckleberry Finn's" creator, that *very phrase* occurred. Both of these points are elaborated in the chapters which follow.

At length occurred an extraordinary piece of luck for a man whose specialty is biography. My cousin, Miss Harriet Sheldon Douglas, who was about to start on a journey from which she feared she might not return, placed in my hands for safekeeping a packet of original letters. They were written, she said, by General Grant to her father, my great-uncle, the late Doctor John Hancock Douglas. Doctor Douglas held the position of Inspector of the U. S. Sanitary Commission during the Civil War. During the early part of the Civil War, Doctor Douglas met Grant at or near Fort Donelson, Tennessee, and became a staunch, and probably outspoken supporter, at a time following the battle of Shiloh when Grant was in disgrace and had many enemies. After the war Doctor Douglas became personal physician to General John Rawlins, Grant's Chief of Staff,—(the same Rawlins who was not only referred to as keeper of Grant's con-

Preface

science, but of whom it was said “open up Grant’s head and out will come Rawlins’s brains”) — and he (Doctor Douglas) stayed in attendance upon Rawlins until the latter’s death.

Twenty years after their first meeting, as signs of General Grant’s fatal illness became apparent, it was natural that he should consult Doctor Douglas. Later as the disease progressed, Douglas practically camped at the Grant home, before and after which time the great soldier (speechless with cancer of the throat) wrote to him innumerable memoranda and letters, saying things which he wished no one, especially his family, to know *at that time*. If it was impossible to re-establish Grant’s belief in a man who had become his enemy, one of his equally abiding traits was staunch confidence, once given, in a friend: and the relationship between the unpretentious western warrior and my rather formal New England ancestor became a thing of rugged strength. Grant gave the last ounce to his work; Douglas shortened his own life in the fight to save Grant.

Considering them privileged documents Doctor Douglas carried these letters to the edge of the grave, and his daughter might have done likewise except for circumstances not necessary to relate. There are in all about 120 of these faded slips of paper, all written in pencil, dated at various times of the day and night, the conditions frequently noted on the back in Doctor Douglas’s neat handwriting. Madigan,¹ well-known autographer, pronounces them authentic, not that there is any doubt. It goes without saying that I have not changed a word in

¹Died since above was written.

Preface

the text; wherever a phrase or sentence is omitted it is so specified. Perhaps two-thirds of the notes are omitted altogether because they have to do with intimate, physical details, and from a feeling that they are too pitiful for print.

For amplifying material I am indebted to the letters and the lengthy diary of Doctor Douglas which gives the detailed report of Grant's illness; to Robert Underwood Johnson, who came perhaps as close as anybody to being Grant's literary mentor and who was good enough in addition to his reminiscences to give me verbal material for the early chapters; to the custodian of the Grant homestead at Galena, Illinois; to Colonel Ulysses S. Grant 3rd, who indicated some sources of information but made no effort to guide the manuscript in any way; to Rodman Gilder, son of the Richard Watson Gilder mentioned in the text; and to Earle Walbridge, librarian; and to Frederick H. Meserve for his courtesy in regard to photographs. Acknowledgment is due to *Harper's Magazine* in which there appeared a condensed version of certain of these chapters; and to Percy Hutchison who during a day of literary chatter pounded on the table "If you don't put that Grant stuff into book form I will."

To Maxwell Perkins, creative editor, I am indebted not only for inventing the framework within which the book should fall, but for his understanding criticisms; to Barbara Green for translating my hieroglyphics on to the typewriter, and especially to E. T. G. for checking quotations and other lengthy labors.

In two matters the writer has taken liberties with known facts. Although Grant first wrote four magazine

Preface

articles, starting with the Battle of Shiloh, and then filled in the rest of the Personal Memoirs, it has been necessary, for the sake of unity and sequence, to assume in the opening chapters that his Memoirs were written in the order in which they were actually published. Uniformly I refer to Grant as "writing" his Memoirs although on many days his voice was strong enough for him to dictate. All the notes to Doctor Douglas, however, are in Grant's own handwriting. At the very end it is stated that Mrs. Grant stayed alone at her husband's side after the others had left the room. If she did not do so at the time, she presumably returned to the room later.

Among the books mentioned in the bibliography, for such persons as are interested in personal details, I would recommend General Horace Porter's *Campaigning with Grant* which in some ways is on a part with Hern-don's *Lincoln*. *The True Ulysses S. Grant* by General Charles King, while sentimental, is of particular value for West Point and early army days. General Chetlain, a resident of Galena, gives the most factual account of Grant's Illinois sojourn and the part played by such men as Congressman E. B. Washburne. Unfortunately these volumes are difficult to obtain; not so the biography by Louis A. Coolidge in the American Statesmen Series, from which copious quotations are taken.

It will be noted that in the present work, the preliminary chapters merely skim certain features of Grant's career, and that a general knowledge of the military and political aspects on the part of the reader is assumed. In this respect I follow Owen Wister's compact and charming work. As for the condensations, the writer has been

Preface

guided by the belief that good biography, like good fiction, attempts the difficult task of holding a mirror to life. But is there not an even deeper satisfaction in biography — in lifting the curtain which hides the real facts of human performance — than there can be in any but the most finely conceived inventions? Isn't there more drama? Isn't there the sense of personal adventure in being admitted to the joys or sorrows, inspirations or deprivations that guide a man or woman toward achievement? Isn't there a fascination in deciphering the welter of unspoken thoughts which race behind every outspoken word?

As stated at the outset nobody appreciates better than the writer the difficulties of adding anything new, whether by way of material or of interpretation, to so familiar a figure as the hero of Appomattox. Similarly if any new material is in fact discovered, no one feels more strongly than a biographer the duty of putting it into permanent form.

In a small sense, therefore, this book is an account of a soldier's final illness. But in a deeper sense it is a survey of that soldier's life, particularly the martial aspects, as they passed through his mind and memory during the heroic months of "General Grant's Last Stand."

GRANT and Lee were as different as the problems they faced. Each was endowed with characteristics necessary for the cause he served. We cannot force parallel lines to meet for the sake of our own convenience in argument; to praise Lee at the expense of Grant or to magnify Grant for the purpose of belittling Lee, is not only an ungracious task, but nine times out of ten an untruthful one. For the most part this book relives Grant's life as he relived it while making his last stand. It confesses to be written from the Grant point of view; yet the more one studies Grant's assaults, the more one is forced to marvel at Lee's defense.

PART ONE

CHAPTER I

The Saddle Back of Time

§ 1

ON A beautiful June day in the year 1884 a thick-set man, with a square jaw hidden beneath sandy whiskers, sat at ease on the broad verandah of a simple wooden cottage at Long Branch, New Jersey, and stared solemnly at the sea. At first sight there was nothing about the man's appearance to attract attention.¹ He was not well and therefore a white silk scarf was wrapped about his throat. In spite of the summer weather he wore a heavy, dark cape. He spoke in low, but singularly vibrant tones to a visitor, a younger man who in rather formal and tactful manner nodded his head from time to time. The elder man was ex-President Ulysses S. Grant and his visitor Robert Underwood Johnson, at that time associate editor for the Century Company, publishers, of New York City.

General Grant had just decided to undertake a new task which under the circumstances of his age and condition he must have known would be his last. Not long after the visitor left, and in the same casual tones in

¹Told to the writer by Robert Underwood Johnson. Doctor Johnson states that in the morning Grant had worn an ordinary business suit and gave no outward indication of ill health. Doctor Douglas' diary and other evidence show, nevertheless, that cancer was already under way. It was during June that Mrs. Grant sent for Doctor Da Costa of Philadelphia. Both versions are therefore consistent.

Grant's Last Stand

which he might call for another cigar, he asked for his dispatch book; and after ruminating for some time, this plain military man, whom many people considered as having no book knowledge, wrote in pencil on a large yellow pad of approximately the same size as that used in writing the terms of surrender at Appomattox Court House, the first two sentences in the first paragraph of what was to become his autobiography:

“ ‘Man proposes and God disposes.’ There are but few important events in the affairs of men brought about by their own choice.”²

§ 2

Ex-President Grant was at this time sixty-three years of age. He had already lived the life of several ordinary men. Over and over he had climbed to the top of the ladder, only to be catapulted to the foot. His successes had come in waves—great, glorious, white-capped waves; and his failures had followed almost as regularly as the trough between the waves. His humiliations—which were many—seemed, in fact, to be an inevitable aftermath of success, and a necessary prelude to reaching greater heights.

Let us observe him from the vantage point of time. He had been a drab farm youngster and a moderately successful West Pointer. His Mexican War career was brilliant; his subsequent army career so dismal that he resigned. At the outset of the Civil War, when General Lee was being offered command of the Union forces,

²At a later time the quotation was incorporated in the preface to *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*.

The Saddle Back of Time

Grant's modest letter to the War Department requesting "very respectfully to tender my services until the close of the war in such capacity as may be offered" was left unanswered. He rose to heights; revealed his fiber by the "unconditional" capture of Fort Donelson. Yet within two weeks he had been relieved of command because he had supposedly not obeyed General Halleck's orders. (He never got the orders.) After the Pyrrhic victory of Shiloh, public opinion literally tore to pieces his growing reputation. He tried to resign again—would have done so but for Sherman. He writhed and pondered and fretted, absorbed the gallwood diet on which character is built, learned the lesson that each man teaches to himself. He went on to Vicksburg, Chattanooga, the Wilderness, Richmond, Appomattox, the White House. During both terms as President he was at times so brutally criticized that he wrote (strange thing for a person of Grant's military mould) the most apologetic farewell message ever sent to Congress by a Chief Executive.

Can one wonder? Not after seeing as a mere sample, amidst a plethora of mud, a cartoon in *Harper's Weekly*, January 6, 1876, while Grant was still President. Under it is the caption: "*The Drunken Democrat Whom the Republicans Dragged Out of the Galena Gutter, Besmeared with the Blood of His Countrymen Slain in Domestic Broil, and Lifted to a High Pedestal as Moloch of Their Worship . . . Rules . . . Over the Prostrate Ruins of Washington's Republic.*" Six weeks and four days later the same magazine stated editorially that "General Grant, both as soldier and statesman has done more than any other man since Washington to preserve the

Grant's Last Stand

theory of popular government in this country, and by his influence, abroad." White-capped waves and the dark trough between.

Leaving the Presidency, Grant journeyed to England; and England, where many had laughed at Lincoln, and his "Butcher" assistant in the army, did her best to make amends. Europe followed suit. Grant returned in high triumph, and nearly succeeded in being the first, and probably the last, American to be ushered three times into the turmoil of the White House. But in a stormy third-term convention events again swept him aside, this time in bitter humiliation. Superficially placid, inwardly chagrined (for he had not yet learned to treat Kipling's two impostors, fame and failure, just the same) he never forgave the men who had used him for their own devices and desires.

He organized a railroad scheme in Guatemala. This and other ventures were a failure. Then came another interlude of peace, and another disaster.

§ 3

For two years following the Guatemala fiasco the outlook improved for Grant. At last he had said goodbye to ambition. Largely through gifts, he had become owner of three houses and an income of about \$5000. Beyond that, a group consisting of William H. Vanderbilt, Jay Gould, and John W. Mackay had raised through subscription and *The New York Times* a fund for the support of the General and his family aggregating an additional yearly return of \$15,000. The General bought

The Saddle Back of Time

himself a brick house at 3 East 66th Street,³ New York City, where he dispensed such hospitality as he saw fit. His two married sons and his grandchildren were living near by. He was devoted to his wife, and contented in his home. His investments through his son, Ulysses S. Grant, Jr., were yielding amazing profits. All that he asked for was a chance to coast in peace along the autumn road.

Consider at that time a stoop-shouldered and somewhat portly figure of sixty-three years; quiet-mannered, dignified, and soft-spoken—a man whose granite jaws were hidden beneath sandy whiskers and whose steel-gray eyes, the right one slightly drooping, were often veiled behind the smoke of his favorite Havanas as he talked with old cronies that dropped into the house or office or took a naïve delight in going about on equal terms with rich men of affairs. Was he not Ulysses Simpson Grant, ex-President of the United States, ex-director of her armies, now casually powerful in finance, director of the Mexican Southern Railway, and silent partner in the phenomenal success of Grant and Ward, bankers? . . .

His evil genius this time came in the shape of young Mr. Ferdinand Ward. Ulysses S. Grant, Jr., known as "Buck," had gone into partnership with Ward. The rising young Wall Street operator permitted the General and his (Ward's) father-in-law, James Fish, president of the Marine Bank of Brooklyn, to invest. Grant did nothing in half measures. Mr. Ward's unusual ability and attractive personality had convinced other men of sup-

³Torn down as this book is in process of writing.

Grant's Last Stand

posed judgment. He pursued various lines of operation. His use of Grant's name, in manner not countenanced by Grant, coupled with deft insinuations about government contracts, was effective. More effective still was the payment of supposed dividends from borrowed capital.

On Sunday, May 4, 1884, Ward called at General Grant's house to inform him that the Marine Bank was embarrassed and that it was urgent to raise \$150,000, which would be repaid by Monday noon. Grant got the money from William H. Vanderbilt. Vanderbilt said, in effect, "I'm not doing this for the Marine Bank or the firm of Grant & Ward, but for you, General, personally."

On Tuesday, May 6, Grant was ascending the old-fashioned elevator to his office on the upper floor, when he met his son, Ulysses. "Buck" was white-faced. The firm of Grant & Ward had failed. Ward had disappeared. There was no record of Vanderbilt's \$150,000. A search of the safe revealed little.

The General spoke scarcely a word, but late that afternoon the cashier found him at his desk with head buried on his arms. On a pad beside him lay a pencilled column of figures, names of friends and relatives whom he had dragged down. Grant, and his sons, his wife, his nieces, and many old army friends who had invested through Grant were wiped out. Worse yet, public opinion had turned against the veteran who had thrown his benefactions into questionable Wall Street operations. The debt to Vanderbilt he considered a private obligation. To Vanderbilt he turned over title to No. 3 East 66th Street, the farm in Missouri, a house in Philadelphia, all his war trophies, including the sword that General Lee had

The Saddle Back of Time

been unable to capture. To his niece he wrote, ". . . your Aunt Jennie must not fret. . . . As long as I live she shall enjoy it (my home) as a matter of right; at least until she recovers what she has lost."

Grant himself had not money to pay the grocer's bills.

§ 4

Outwardly, as always, Grant gave no indication that he understood the public scorn, mixed with pity, which was worse to a man of his mold. He could have drifted out pennilessly, down in the trough, between the white-capped waves. But he had in him one more fight—the last and the best. He came to a decision to make money the only way left. Through Grant's letters and the diary of John Hancock Douglas, M.D., we shall watch Grant as he drives himself to this final work in a strange field, concealing from his family, so far as possible, the price he paid. We shall review with him, and to some extent through his own eyes, the major events of his life, comparing his own viewpoint with that of others. In the short span that is left we shall see him write two elaborate volumes, containing approximately 295,000 words, and totalling 1231 pages—pages objectively written without evidence of the pain which drenched their author. We shall learn, what he could not know, that the work was to bring his family \$450,000, a non-fiction publishing record to this day!

Occasionally, too, we shall look behind the scenes, as for example when he writes to his friend and physician Douglas:

"I prefer to have the work accurate, so far as time is

Grant's Last Stand

given me to carry it on.” Or when he writes: “I said that I had been adding to my book and my coffin. I presume every strain to the mind is another nail in my coffin.” Or when the work is nearly done: “My life is precious, of course, to my family, and would be to me if I could recover entirely. I first wanted so many days to work on my book so the authorship would be clearly mine. It was graciously granted to me. . . . Since that I have added as much as fifty pages. There is nothing more I should do to it now [Therefore] I should prefer going to enduring my present suffering for a single day without hope of recovery.”

* * * * *

We have been galloping along the saddle back of time.
Let us first turn back the clock.

CHAPTER II

Beginning of the Memoirs

ON THAT June day at Long Branch, New Jersey, the sixty-three-year-old veteran had just decided to write his memoirs in order to pay his debts. With him the gap between decision and action was invariably small.

For some time after his editor, Mr. Johnson, had departed, General Grant stared immovably toward the sea's unending smile; and presently its mirrored rim rewarded him with memories.¹ He recalled that his real name was Hiram Ulysses Grant² and that he had had no desire to go to West Point in the first place. It was that way early in life and it was that way throughout life. Before any act of importance somebody had to shove him into gear; but once in gear there was no unlocking of the mesh. He remembered that during the 1838-39 Christmas holidays, when he was seventeen years of age, the Grant family was living at Georgetown, Ohio. "During this vacation," Grant wrote on his yellow pad, "my father

¹The house had been lent to Grant by George W. Child. It was not directly on the water front, but the ocean was in view.

²According to Doctor Douglas's diary Grant was baptized in the New York house three months and three weeks before his death. The baptism took place at 4 A.M., April 2, 1885, at a moment when death was believed imminent.

Grant's Last Stand

received a letter from the Honorable Thomas Morris, then United States Senator from Ohio. When he read it he said to me:

“‘Ulysses, I believe you are going to receive the appointment.’

“‘What appointment?’ I inquired.

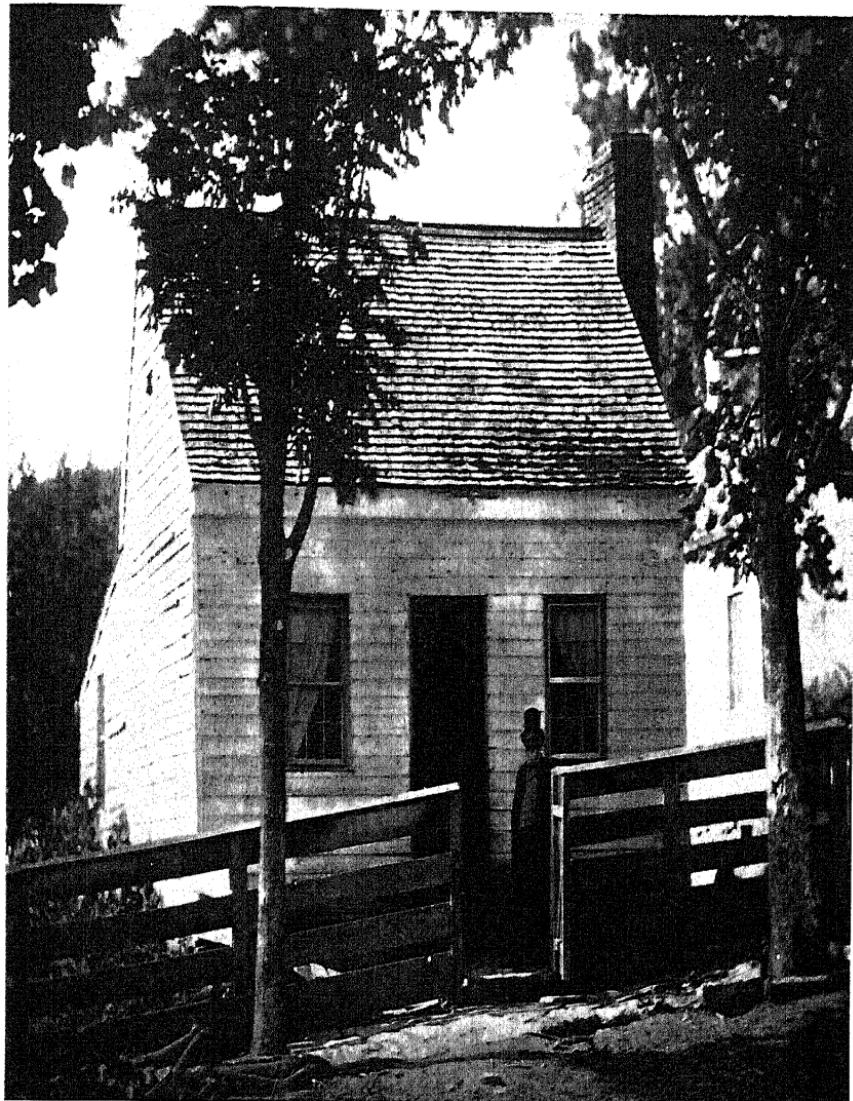
“‘To West Point; I have applied for it.’

“‘But I won’t go,’ I said. He said he thought I would, *and I thought so too, if he did.*” (The italics are Grant’s.)

When the cadet reached West Point he discovered that the name on the bulletin board had been registered as Ulysses S. Grant. Congressman Hamer, who nominated him (this too was a bit of fate, the original nominee having died in the meantime), had sent in the middle name “Simpson” which was his mother’s name.

Here came another example of staying in gear once the clutches had been moved for him. Young Grant decided too much governmental red tape was involved in the change, so he let the matter drop. But thereafter he clung to the new name as if it had been the throat of the Confederacy.

Grant disliked tactics, drilling, deportment, parades, shiny buttons, clean shoes, correct carriage, all the trim accoutrements of soldiery. His final rank was twenty-one in a class of forty-nine but he was a stout man in arithmetic and horsemanship. “Sam Grant,” as an army wag later put it, “was good at mules and mathematics.” Up to that time one of the drab figures of the class, there is a picturesque story of his clearing the bar twice running at 5 ft. 7 in., mounted on a chestnut sorrel called Old York, who would scarcely lift a hoof with others in the saddle.



Copyrighted by F. L. Dickenson

Courtesy O. Baird, Ripley, Ohio

"For a long time he stared at the sea's unending smile; and presently its mirrored rim rewarded him with memories. . . ."

Birthplace of General U. S. Grant, Point Pleasant, Clermont County, Ohio. The pleased-looking old gentleman at gate is Doctor Rogers, the attending physician at General Grant's birth



Courtesy of F. H. Meserve

Jesse Root Grant and Hannah Simpson Grant, father and mother of
General Grant

"My family is American, and has been for generations, in all its branches,
direct and collateral"

Beginning of the Memoirs

Not high as today's records go, yet the feat is still a legend of horsemanship at The Point.

General James B. Fry, at the time a candidate for admission, was standing along the rails when an official board of visitors including Winfield Scott were being entertained.

"When the regular service was completed," writes General Fry, "the class, still mounted, was formed in a line through the center of the hall. The riding-master placed the leaping-bar higher than a man's head and called out, 'Cadet Grant!' A clean-faced, slender, blue-eyed young fellow, weighing one hundred and twenty pounds, dashed from the ranks on a powerfully built chestnut sorrel horse and galloped down the opposite side of the hall. As he turned at the farther end and came into the stretch across which the bar was placed, the horse increased his pace, and measuring his strides for the great leap before him, bounded into the air and cleared the bar, carrying his rider as if man and beast had been welded together. The spectators were speechless. 'Very well done, sir!' growled old Hershberger, the riding-master, and the class was dismissed and disappeared; but Cadet Grant remained a living image in my memory."

As a first choice after graduation Lieutenant Grant preferred to stay at the Academy as a teacher of mathematics, as a second choice he wished to be assigned to the cavalry. "Man proposes; God disposes." Cold orders sent him to Jefferson Barracks, near St. Louis, Missouri, where he saw a great deal of the daughter of a well-to-do plantation owner, a Miss Julia Dent. Had it not been for the jolt of new orders removing him to another distant station in Mexican War preparation, it is possible that his deep feelings in the direction of

Grant's Last Stand

Miss Dent might never have found the surface of speech.
Grant wrote on his pad:³

I mustered up courage to make known, in the most awkward manner imaginable, the discovery I had made on learning that the 4th infantry had been ordered away from Jefferson Barracks. The young lady afterwards admitted that she too . . . had experienced a depression of spirits she could not account for when the regiment left.

There resulted a bargain to which Grant clung with singular tenacity for forty-one years.

Occasionally while Grant was writing his memoirs a mild-mannered, homely woman with long, straight black hair parted in the middle and pulled down tightly over the ears would appear in the room. Often in his concentration the General did not notice. His memory was taking a salute from the past. He was galloping along the road to a rendezvous of life—with Julia. But even in describing those early days he could not forget that persistent characteristic of his, that hatred of turning back, once the gears were in mesh, that almost superstitious desire to “fight it out on this line if it takes all summer.”

He wrote:⁴

I immediately procured a horse and started for the country, taking no baggage with me, of course. There is an insignificant creek—the Gravois—between Jefferson Barracks and the place to which I was going, and at that day there was not a bridge over it from its source to its mouth. There is not water

³*Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant* were sometimes dictated, sometimes written.

⁴*Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant.*

Beginning of the Memoirs

enough in the creek at ordinary stages to run a coffee mill, and at low water there is none running whatever. On this occasion it had been raining heavily, and when the creek was reached, I found the banks full to overflowing, and the current rapid. I looked at it a moment to consider what to do. *One of my superstitions had always been when I started to go anywhere, or to do anything, not to turn back, or stop until the thing intended was accomplished.* [Italics are the author's.] I have frequently started to go places where I had never been and to which I did not know the way, depending upon making inquiries on the road, and if I got past the place without knowing it, instead of turning back, I would go on until a road was found turning in the right direction, take that, and come in by the other side. So I struck into the stream, and in an instant the horse was swimming and I being carried down by the current. I headed the horse toward the other bank and soon reached it, wet through and without other clothes on that side of the stream. I went on, however, to my destination and borrowed a dry suit from my future brother-in-law. We were not of the same size, but the clothes answered every purpose until I got more of my own.

And so it was that for two important surrenders, that of Julia Dent at the White Haven farm and that of Robert Lee in the McLean house at Appomattox, Virginia, Grant's costume was subordinated in concentration on the greater purpose at hand.

CHAPTER III

A Note to Dr. Douglas—West Point—Mexico

§ 1

GENERAL GRANT'S last stand—the writing of his memoirs—was in keeping with his character. Disaster stung him into resolve; resolve was translated into action; action was pushed forward without public comment. His real thoughts, his philosophy, his occasional grim humor, his acknowledgments of pain, were reserved for the faded slips of paper handed, or sent, to Doctor Douglas.

In a memorandum addressed to Doctor Douglas, he states:¹

If I live long enough I will become a sort of specialist in the use of certain medicines if not in the treatment of disease. It seems that man's destiny in this world is quite as much a mystery as it is likely to be in the next. I never thought of acquiring rank in the profession I was educated for; yet it came with two grades higher prefixed to the rank of General officer(s) for me. I certainly never had either ambition or taste for political life; yet I was twice President of the United States. If any one had suggested the idea of my becoming an author, as they frequently did, I was not sure whether they were making sport of me or not. I have now written a book which is in the

¹The second page of this revealing note, which was lost for some years, has been discovered just as we go to press. It is here given in full. It is dated July 8, 4 A.M.

A Note to Doctor Douglas

hands of the manufacturers. I ask that you keep these notes very private lest I become an authority on the treatment of diseases. I have already too many trades to be proficient in any. Of course I feel very much better for your application of cocaine, the first in three days, or I should never have thought of saying what I have said above.

If I live long enough I will become a sort of specialist in the use of certain medicines if not in the treatment of disease. It seems that one means existing in this world is quite as much a mystery as it is likely to be in the next. I never thought of allying rank in the profession I was educated for; yet it came with two good higher pillars for me. I certainly never had either ambition or taste for political life; yet I was twice president of the United States. So if any one had suggested the idea of my becoming an

Letter in which Grant outlines his fatalistic beliefs and states that he never had "either ambition or taste for political life"

Grant's Last Stand

§ 2

In the *Memoirs*, however, General Grant skips directly from the mention of his engagement to Julia Dent to events of the Mexican War which put an end to thoughts of marriage at the time.

After being ordered from St. Louis, Grant's regiment lay in camp for fourteen months near the Red River, and later in barracks at New Orleans. In Mexico, whenever there was actual fighting to be done he managed, in spite of the quartermaster duties to which he had been assigned, to be on the spot. Says Longstreet: "Grant was everywhere on the field. He was always cool, swift, and unhurried in battle . . . unconscious apparently, as though it were a hailstorm instead of a storm of bullets . . . I heard his colonel say: 'There goes a man of fire.' " "At Chapultepec," Louis A. Coolidge tells us that "he found a belfry which commanded an important position, dragged a mountain howitzer to the top of it with the help of a few men, and dropped shots upon the enemy to their great confusion."

General Worth, Major Francis Lee, and others mentioned him in orders, and he was breveted captain for gallant conduct. He was so matter of fact and professional about it all and without ability or desire to capitalize events that he did not receive applause outside the army; and even among his own it is doubtful whether Lee, Jackson, Pemberton and Johnston thought, as Coolidge puts it, "that in plain little Grant they were disclosing their true military quality to a coming conqueror." In later years the lack of ability to be dramatic was the sub-

A Note to Doctor Douglas

ject of highest military compliment, as on the occasion when a shell burst uncomfortably close to the log where Grant sat writing orders in his dispatch book. The General-in-Chief continued writing without moving a muscle.

"Sam Grant don't scare worth a damn," commented a soldier who was standing near by.²

§ 3

After the Mexican War Grant entered a long, inconspicuous era which might never have ended had a crisis not arisen contemporaneous with his years of greatest vigor and experience—a crisis in which his stubborn, single-track nature was required to weld together those preponderant, but scattered advantages, which the North undoubtedly possessed, could they only be focused on the enemy. This period is comparable to Lincoln's obscure years as a middle-aged lawyer; to Hindenburg's life in Hanover during the years prior to the Great War when he was on the retired list; to Franklin D. Roosevelt's years of reflection after the disease which he thought at first had disabled him from public availability; comparable to the long periods of incubation through which most men must pass if their greatness is to be sustained—except that in Grant's case the obscurity was more pronounced and the future even less pronounceable.

When the curtain rang down in Mexico he was once

²The remark was made by a slightly wounded man who was being led to the rear at the "Bloody Angle" of Spottsylvania. Reported in *Reminiscences of Major E. R. Jones*.

Grant's Last Stand

more enveloped in his own drabness. There came a cheerless winter in Sackett's Harbor, Lake Ontario, and a more cheerful one united with his family in Detroit. With his regiment, and without his family, he was next ordered to the Pacific Coast. On the way across the Isthmus transportation broke down because of the gold rush and Grant, in the rôle of quartermaster, pulled the regiment out of the cholera-infested region, seeming to be "a man of iron . . . seldom sleeping and then only 2 or 3 hours at a time . . . he was like a ministering angel to us all," wrote one who knew him then.³ Settled at the army posts the ministering angel relapsed into a lethargic pay clerk; and it is in keeping with his character to note that instead of engineering a medal for the great work on the Isthmus he merely answered detailed questionnaires of a kind that only a Quartermaster Department, or income tax bureau, could devise.

Every army officer knows how to lay stress on insignificant details to keep up morale in times of inaction. These details were so much rubbish to Grant, who in his boredom fell back on drinking. There are stories showing the reverse of the shield: driving three horses abreast in the middle of the night down the streets of a Western town in a wild burst of reaction, followed presumably by another gloomy stretch. He would mull over long letters from home; answer them laboriously. On one of them his wife had traced the outline of a baby's hand, that of his second son, whom he had never seen, born at a distance of 8000 miles by water route. Grant became

³*The Life of Ulysses S. Grant*, by Louis A. Coolidge, who does not reveal the source of his information.

A Note to Doctor Douglas

chummy with a German drill sergeant, perhaps another of those "Wer nur die Sehnsucht kennt." Occasionally when the sun, dozing at the rim of Humboldt Bay, brought the long afternoons to a close, he and the sergeant would pass the time of day. When the glasses had been emptied two or three times Lieutenant Grant would fumble in his pocket and, sheepishly, show his friend the tracing on the letter . . .

§ 4

When Grant was quartered at Humboldt Bay, a lonely station to the south of Columbia Barracks, later Fort Vancouver, in Oregon, the commanding officer was a certain Bob Buchanan, known in orders as Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Robert C. Buchanan, former captain Fourth Infantry, U.S.A.—a typical soldier of the old school—conscientious, upright, very much of a gentleman from all accounts, and doting on all the details of his profession, including, as General Charles King, another West Pointer, puts it, "all the starch and buckram, pomp and circumstance, fuss and feathers" that Ulysses hated. Buchanan and Grant started off on the wrong foot. In order to reach Humboldt Bay Grant had to go way down the coast to San Francisco and back, and there had been long delayed in transferring funds and property to his successor. Buchanan did not approve. There has been much discussion of Grant's enforced resignation and a good deal of criticism of the punctilious senior officer at that forsaken post, but the evidence is that Schoolmaster Buchanan tried to do the right thing according to his lights. Homesickness, lack of pay, and the

Grant's Last Stand

fact that Grant saw "no chance of supporting them [my family] on the Pacific Coast out of my pay as an army officer" made him willing to quit the army in any event. But the impetus was official. As a bachelor regimental quartermaster Grant put up many a visitor in his quarters: straight whiskey from the barrel was the usual form of hospitality in which the host did his share. The trouble with Grant was that whereas in most people it loosened the inhibitions, and in others of acute sensibility (like Edgar Poe) a little upset the nerves, in Grant's case it probably went to his legs. After a few warnings Buchanan said in effect:

"Hand me your resignation. I'll not send it in unless there is another relapse."

The relapse came. And the resignation went. To Grant himself and to those who knew him best he was quitting the service because he never liked it, because he saw no future, because he had recently received his captaincy, and above all because with nothing to occupy a real man, he could not stand the isolation from the fireside at White Haven.

He took a boat to San Francisco, where he raised enough money on an extra pay check for court-martial services, to take a sidewheeler to Panama, thence back to New York.

In New York City was forged the first link in a curious chain of circumstances. One Simon Bolivar Buckner,⁴ class of '44 at West Point, who fought side by side with him at Molino in Mexico, was a captain of commissary stationed in New York when Grant arrived

⁴For the best flavor of days at "The Point" and old army friends, see *The True Ulysses S. Grant*, by General Charles King.

A Note to Doctor Douglas

penniless. It was this Simon Buckner who "lent" Grant money to get home to St. Louis at a moment when Ulysses was at one of the lowest tides of his misfortune. It was Simon Buckner who ten years later was hoisted into the command of Fort Donelson in the middle of the battle by that name. It was this General Buckner, therefore, whom Grant called upon for "unconditional and immediate surrender . . . I propose to move at once upon your works"; and who did surrender to Grant in spite of "the ungentlemanly and unchivalrous terms." That victory, as you will remember, in the tottering days of 1862 galvanized the North into action when most of the action had been on the other side, shoved the victor one step up the ladder of public esteem. Finally, a quarter of a century later, when Grant lay in agonies of cancer at Mt. McGregor, it was again Buckner who made a final pilgrimage up the Hudson Valley mountainside, to offer a soldier's last salute. To his physician, Doctor Douglas, Grant wrote that day on a faded slip of paper, and wrote with evident pride:⁵

*Gen. Buckner—Fort Donelson
son—will be here on the next
train. He is coming up specially
to pay his respects.*

"Gen. Buckner—Fort Donelson—will be here on the next train. He is coming up specially to pay his respects."

⁵General Grant's letters to Doctor Douglas.

CHAPTER IV

Resignation

§ 1

FROM the time of his army resignation until the summer of 1861 Grant entered the most obscure period of his life. Like so many men whose faculties later make them prominent, a long period of uncomfortable gestation was necessary. The period, as already mentioned, is comparable to Lincoln's lean, uncomfortable years between the passing of the Wilmot Proviso and his emergence into fame through the Douglas debates, years when he scraped a meager living out of his law partnership with his garrulous but shrewd old friend, William Herndon—the Bill Herndon who called him the old “Tycoon” and to whom Lincoln is believed to have declared at that time, “when I die there’s not ten men outside of Sangamon County will remember the name of Abraham Lincoln.” Hindenburg went through the same stagnant phase during the years following his first retirement, days when he used to potter around the town of Hanover, doing the household marketing, and writing to his son that “from now on my only satisfaction can be in your achievements.” Then came the World War.

About a dozen miles outside of St. Louis lay an eighty-acre woodland tract which had been given to Grant’s wife for a wedding present six years previously. Here Grant set

Resignation

himself to cut the timber, clear the land and build a log homestead. Presumably he borrowed from his father or father-in-law for the purchase of mules, farm implements and the like; and he worked steadily with his head just above water as is suggested by the grimly humorous name which he gave to his estate, "Hard Scrabble." He carted grain and cordwood into town, where he sold it for hard cash. The life appeared to agree with him. He liked to sweat with horses. He was of the earth, earthy; and here was something he could struggle with. Grant states of himself: "I managed to reef along very well until 1858, when I was attacked by fever and ague . . . It lasted now over a year, and, while it did not keep me in the house, it did interfere greatly with the amount of work I was able to perform."

In the winter of 1857-58 he leased "Hard Scrabble" and took the Dent farm itself, where he planted 140 acres of oats, corn and wheat. He gives no reason other than the above for giving up this congenial though not enriching work. Perhaps the ague made physical labor impossible; perhaps it was something to do with the panic of 1857.

At all events he next moved into a small house at 1008 Barton Street, St. Louis, which, from the only pictures extant, looks like a dreary counterpart of that dreary year. He went into partnership with Henry Boggs, a real estate agent, a bad venture for both. All hands agree that as a money acquisitor "Cap" Grant was beyond the pale; in the face of any hard luck story from a tenant he was helpless. The association ended shortly. Its chief value to history lies in a statement made by Boggs's

Grant's Last Stand

widow. Grant tried and failed to get the appointment as county engineer. He tramped about town job hunting, borrowing here and there, an undoubted example of what psychologists call "neurotic maladjustment." Later Mrs. Boggs recalled: "He had no exalted opinion of himself at any time, but in those days he was almost in despair. He walked the streets looking for something to do. He was actually the most obscure man in St. Louis. Nobody took any notice of him."

After the St. Louis failure Grant moved to Galena, Illinois, where his two younger brothers operated a general merchandise store.

Though Galena was not Grant's birthplace it is usually spoken of as his home town. Here he lived until the Civil War broke out; here he returned after the war to the house which had been presented him as a testimonial; his thoughts turned to Galena when his name was mentioned as probable Republican nominee for President, and when he was asked about his platform he answered, "A new sidewalk for Main Street in Galena." The town lies in the northwest corner of Illinois a few miles south of the Wisconsin line and a few miles east of where the Mississippi River separates Illinois from Iowa. Recently the writer and his Ford rolled through the East's comparatively suburban plains toward Grant's Galena home in quest of fresh material; and in its environs there was distinct relief in the green carpet of rolling hills which slope in lower and still lower waves toward the Mississippi River's edge—relief as well as a cooling memory to be carried to the scorching areas further south and west. Around about Galena the country is a reminder of

Resignation

the upper reaches of the Connecticut Valley in New England. And it is here that the curving Fever River, after many a false start, at length flows, silent and imperturbable as Grant himself, to cast in its lot with the Father of American Waters. On a hillside, a scant one-half mile from the center, stands the non-committal red brick homestead of the Grants, containing such pictures and relics as were not sent to Washington, now jealously guarded by their custodian, Captain R. L. Moody, gassed veteran of the World War and former member of the *Legion Etrangère*. The house has not changed greatly Captain Moody tells you; and to the visitor it appears that Galena, too, has kept itself aloof from the standardized march of time.

Here, in the year 1860, Grant was given a clerkship under his younger brothers at \$800 per annum, his functions being to take care of the ledgers and do the "heavy" work. Tending customers and driving bargains was not in his line. If Grant read enough contemporary history to know that Abraham Lincoln, also of Illinois, had tended store, and sometimes slept on the counter, not so many years ago—it did not in any event brighten Grant's spirits. More than ever he seemed during that year of adversity to "shrink within himself," according to General Charles King, one of the best authorities on the obscure portions of Grant's life. General King got the following description from an unnamed Galena town mate:

A man who later came well-nigh to worship him, a would-be soldier even then, told the writer that when he heard there

Grant's Last Stand

was a Mexican War man—a West Pointer—come to town and working in his father's old “general merchandise” store, bossed by his younger brothers, it excited curiosity and longing to see him. “I went round to the store,” he said, “it was a sharp winter morning, and there wasn't a sign of a soldier or one that looked like a soldier about the shop. But pretty soon a farmer drove up with a lot of hides on his sleigh, and went inside to dicker, and presently a stoop-shouldered brownish-bearded fellow, low, with a slouch hat pulled down over his eyes, who had been sitting whittling at the stove when I was inside, came out, pulling on an old light-blue soldier's overcoat. He flung open the doors leading down into the cellar, laid hold of the top hide, frozen stiff it was, tugged it loose, towed it over and slung it down the chute. Then one by one, all by himself, he heaved off the rest of them, a ten-minutes' tough job in that weather, until he had got the last of them down the cellar; then slouched back into the store again, shed the blue coat, got some hot water off the stove and went and washed his hands, using a cake of brown soap, then came back and went to whittling again, and all without a word to anybody. That was my first look at Grant, and look at him now!”¹

§ 2

On the day that Grant was a country store clerk Lincoln sent his orders to Fort Sumter. The Galena Militia Company took to drilling and some one asked old “Cap” Grant if he wouldn't take a hand. Once the clear, sharp voice rang out there was a transformation in the ranks, for it was obvious that the drillmaster was on familiar ground. The good impression was spoiled when he presided at town hall meeting, a performance he was wise enough to avoid a second time. He went back to his drilling.

¹*The True General Ulysses S. Grant*, by General Charles King.

Resignation

From the welter of accelerated events two episodes of this period stand out. First in importance is the famous, because ignored, letter to the War Department.

Galena, Ill., May 24, 1861.

Sir:—Having served for fifteen years in the regular army, including four years at West Point, and feeling it the duty of every one who has been educated at the government expense to offer their services for the support of that Government, I have the honor, very respectfully, to tender my services, until the close of the war, in such capacity as may be offered.

I would say, in view of my present age and length of service, I feel myself competent to command a regiment, if the President, in his judgment, should see fit to intrust one to me.

Since the first call of the President I have been serving on the staff of the Governor of this State, rendering such aid as I could in the organization of our State militia, and am still engaged in that capacity. A letter addressed to me at Springfield, Illinois, will reach me.

I am very respectfully,

Your obt. svt.,

U. S. GRANT.

The ex-soldier humbled himself in another quarter where he was also ignored. George B. McClellan, who was later to be the great politician-soldier—too adept at each to be successful at the other—and who was also to be Lincoln's rival in the political campaign of 1865, had already been appointed major-general and placed at the head of the military district comprising Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Missouri, with headquarters in St. Louis. He and Grant had been together in California and Grant journeyed to his headquarters hoping to be given an appointment on McClellan's staff. On two separate oc-

Grant's Last Stand

casions Grant called, was kept waiting in the hallways, then fortunately left. It is interesting to ponder his fate had he become McClellan's staff subordinate and so enmeshed in the latter's dilatory Eastern campaigns. Would the blame have been put on Grant? Would he have infused McClellan's parade ground mind with fighting energy? Would they have split? Robert McCormick, whose book, *Ulysses S. Grant: The Great Soldier of America*, is the most eulogistic of all Grant biographies on the military side, advances the theory that it was this McClellan incident which turned Grant into the fatalist he later became.

Meantime Governor Yates of Missouri had been hard pressed by applicants for high rank, but not by Grant, whom he had thought of appointing Brigadier-General of Volunteers. Grant had let it be known that he would not care for high rank until he had earned it. Yates asked a Galena comrade what sort of a man was this Captain Grant, who seemed anxious to serve but "reluctant to take any high position."

"The way to deal with him," said the neighbor, "is to ask him no questions, but simply order him to duty."

The Governor wired, "You are this day appointed Colonel of the Twenty-first Illinois Volunteers and requested to take command at once." He did so the next day, June 27, 1861.

At the camp outside of Springfield there was planned a patriotic jollification, John A. Logan, of oratorical fame, having been appointed to open the ball and introduce the new colonel, who stood "silent, travel-stained, with only a red bandana by way of a sash bound loosely

Resignation

about the waist of his worn, civilian sackcoat." According to General King, before mentioned, Logan furnished a glowing apostrophe and then after the manner of the sovereign citizen of the boundless and unterrified West there were lusty shouts for "Grant!" "Grant!" "Speech!" "Colonel Grant!"

"And the Colonel stepped quietly forward, waited for the tumult to subside, and in precisely four words, made the demanded but by no means the expected address, 'Go to your quarters!' . . .

"And, too much astonished for further words, the men obeyed."

CHAPTER V

Clear the Mississippi!

GRANT'S failure in civil life was attributable not only to breaks of fate but to inability to rouse himself except under unusual circumstances. He spoke in later years of his besetting sin of laziness; it was, however, a laziness in regard to matters which to others seemed important but to him did not. It was as if his faculties were covered with a sort of rust which he could shake off only in emergencies. In desperate circumstances where men of more volatile compound were shattered by the strain, Grant's mind functioned normally, swiftly, concerned only with the fundamental facts.

Hindenburg's similar capacity is well known. Prior to the Battle of Tannenberg when a great pincer operation had been decided upon and orders issued, the other staff officers paced nervously balancing this and the other possibility. Hindenburg announced that he was for sleep, and did sleep soundly. Only once was Grant unable to free himself from nervous disability, and that by his own confession was during the negotiations leading up to the surrender at Appomattox, when, from the contents of Lee's notes, Grant was still afraid that the enemy might slip through his grasp. For the better part of two nights Grant suffered so severely from sick headache that he

Clear the Mississippi!

spent one of them "bathing my feet in hot water and mustard, and putting mustard plasters on my wrists and the back part of my neck, hoping to be cured by morning."

There are those types of military leaders who are so unimaginative that they do not comprehend smaller details, the personal and political outcome of their actions, and who cannot visualize the individual sufferings, the suffering of relations, and the endless stream of consequences dependent upon their rapid decisions. For that reason they make good soldiers, and Grant is usually considered a shining example. A study of all the new material will show, however, that the opposite was the case, that more than any leader of equal importance in history he saw and felt the implications, but resolutely shut his eyes against them.

In view of the fact that one of his most outstanding characteristics was coolness in action, his own description of the growth of this faculty is worth repeating. His first skirmish at the head of the Twenty-first Illinois Volunteers was an abortive attempt at an engagement with a Colonel Thomas Harris who had been doing considerable damage in Missouri.

"As we approached the brow of the hill," writes Grant in the *Memoirs*, "from which it was expected we could see Harris's camp, and possibly find his men ready formed to meet us, my heart kept getting higher and higher until it felt to me as though it was in my throat. I would have given anything then to have been back in Illinois, but I had not the moral courage to halt and consider what to do; I kept right on. When we reached a

Grant's Last Stand

point from which the valley below was in full view I halted. The place where Harris had been encamped a few days before was still there, and the marks of a recent encampment were plainly visible, but the troops were gone. My heart resumed its place. It occurred to me at once that Harris had been as much afraid of me as I had been of him. This was a view of the question I had never taken before; but it was one I never forgot afterwards. From that event to the close of the war, I never experienced trepidation upon confronting an enemy, though I always felt more or less anxiety. I never forgot that he had as much reason to fear my forces as I had his."

Therefore Grant had the great good fortune to receive a slow baptism both in fire and in high command. He was the only professional soldier amongst a raft of newly created colonels and knew his business to the roots. Because he knew the roots he became in fact, though not in name, commander of a brigade. In August, he saw a news report that his name was seventeenth on a list of thirty-three brigadier-generals appointed by the President. "Must be some of Washburne's work," murmured Grant, referring to Elihu B. Washburne, a Congressman from Galena, a transported down-East Yankee, who was one of the first to see the results of Grant's handling of the volunteer mob, and who was later to become Minister to France.

About this time an idea came to Grant's mind. First it came to him as an idea, then as a controlling thought, and finally as an obsession. It was to clear the Mississippi of the Rebels and cut open a way to the Gulf of Mexico.

Clear the Mississippi!

Others had seen the value of commanding the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers as a first step toward this result. Grant saw that it must be done; that it must be done at once; that it must be done with the tools in hand. The first step was to seize and hold Paducah, the second step was to seize Belmont, and the third step was Fort Donelson.

CHAPTER VI

Fort Donelson and Grant's Purse

*I propose to move immediately upon your works. . . .
But here is my purse. . . .*

§ 1

THOSE two phrases, one written and the other spoken by Grant within twenty-four hours, impress themselves upon the memory as typical of that dual personality which this memoir attempts to portray. The first is public property; but the second, which rips the legendary mask, has been sung little, if at all. Its application will be apparent as the story of Fort Donelson proceeds.

Although the capture of Fort Donelson was Grant's first achievement of importance and the name which made the country Grant conscious (and unfortunately the regular army officers correspondingly jealous) it was not the first subject which he wrote about. It was planned by *The Century* people that he should write in order four articles on Shiloh, Vicksburg, The Wilderness, and Lee's Surrender. Eventually the Battle of Chattanooga, or "The Battle Above the Clouds," was substituted for the latter subject.¹ The reason for this was twofold. In the first place, the editors of *The Century* elected to have

¹R. U. Johnston's statement in *Remembered Yesterdays*.

Fort Donelson and Grant's Purse

him write four articles in that order. Later, for book purposes, he filled in the background and foreground to make a complete personal memoir up to the end of the Civil War. The definitive story of the Battle of Shiloh had never been told by the one man who could speak with authority, therefore the lead-off article was devoted to this subject. There was also another, unspoken reason. Grant was at this period, the winter and summer of 1884-85, fighting a double battle—not only was he reliving in his memory the tactics, strategy, orders and counterorders; seeing in his mind's eye the entire panorama of marching men—but he was also fighting the present battle of getting these facts down on paper before the ravages of cancer closed his own throat.

Doctor Douglas had said nothing except that it was “an epithelioma of the squamous variety.” I doubt if Grant was one to be either frightened or soothed by mere words. But as we shall see later he begged Douglas to keep him alive until the work was finished. After that . . . “I should prefer going now to enduring my present suffering for a single day without hope of recovery.” At another time he wrote to Doctor Douglas that he preferred to have the book accurate as far as it went, rather than have it inclusive but inaccurate; and he insisted on doing the work himself so that “the authorship would be clearly mine.”

But to return to Donelson. The battle came about in this way:

Grant had taken possession of the towns of Paducah and Belmont and shortly thereafter his territory of the Southeast Missouri had been designated as the District

Grant's Last Stand

of Cairo, with headquarters at Cairo. His superior in charge of the Department of the Missouri was Major-General Frémont, the Romantic Pathfinder; and when Frémont was removed because of bombastic utterances that were at variance with the administration's policies for saving the border states, Major-General Halleck was appointed in his place in charge of the Department of Missouri. The substitution was of little benefit to Grant. Halleck was an intellectual general, fond of discussing the tactics of the battle of Marengo, and in the uncolorful, and so far as he knew, rather dumb, subordinate who bothered him with crazy plans for action, Halleck saw only what many others saw in him at the time. At first one doubts that Halleck was jealous. Probably he really distrusted a man whom he knew only as a West Pointer who had been plucked from the army, with stories following in his wake of slipshod methods, not to mention an affection for liquor.

Writing about the event thirty years later, Grant could not even then forget the obstacles Halleck interposed. With Halleck's appointment in charge of the entire Missouri district, there was added to Grant's command the small district commanded by General C. F. Smith, embracing the mouths of the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers. Above Halleck in the organization pyramid was General George B. McClellan, the handsome hussar who entirely outshone Lincoln in contemporary estimate and who nearly eclipsed Lincoln in politics.

After the battle of Belmont, which we shall skip because of no great importance, except as a wedge, Grant spent thirteen weeks drilling his troops and consolidating

Fort Donelson and Grant's Purse

his command; then chafing at inaction, asked for permission to call on Halleck at St. Louis. Meantime General Smith at Grant's orders making reconnaissance along the Tennessee River repeated that it was "practicable" to capture Fort Heiman, which completely commanded Fort Henry on the opposite bank of the river, and which in turn was the approach to the more important Fort Donelson.

"On the 6th of January,"² writes Grant, "before receiving orders for this expedition, I had asked permission of the general commanding the department to go to see him at St. Louis. My object was to lay this plan of campaign before him. Now that my views had been confirmed by so able a general as Smith, I renewed my request to go to St. Louis on what I deemed important military business. The leave was granted, but not graciously. I had known General Halleck but very slightly in the old army, not having met him either at West Point or during the Mexican War. I was received with so little cordiality that I perhaps stated the object of my visit with less clearness than I might have done, and I had not uttered many sentences before I was cut short as if my plan was preposterous. I returned to Cairo very much crestfallen."

Flag Officer Foote, who commanded the little navy then operating in the neighborhood of Cairo, agreed with Grant that a campaign up the Tennessee River was practicable. With both the army and the navy turning on the heat, to use the language of the day, "Old Brains,"

²Unless otherwise noted all quotations are from *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*.

Grant's Last Stand

as they called Halleck, consented to an expedition against Fort Henry. Grant communicated to Halleck his second request for permission and thereby learned a manœuvre; for, as we shall see in later battles, he fell into the habit of informing his superior that he was about to do such and such, *but timing the communication so that refusal would reach him too late.*

Grant boarded the gunboat *Essex* to see at what distance it would draw fire from the Fort.

"One shot passed very near where Captain Porter and I were standing, struck the deck near the stern, penetrated and passed through the cabin and so out into the river." The boat fell back down the stream. Later in the bombardment proper a shell penetrated the boiler, killing and wounding forty-eight men. The fort fell, due to the navy bombardment, and with little more than a demonstration from the troops which invested the fort by land.

Grant, enthusiastic, wired his chief, "Fort Henry is ours. The gunboats silenced the batteries before the investment was completed." And again he wired: "I shall take and destroy Fort Donelson on the 8th and return to Fort Henry."

Halleck wired Grant to remain where he was, strengthen the defenses and await reinforcements. At least some history books tell us that the messages back and forth were by telegraph; yet I seriously doubt inasmuch as Grant in his *Memoirs* carefully states that he "informed the department commander of our success at Fort Henry." According to Colonel Robert McCormick, "he wrote Halleck a message which could not reach

Fort Donelson and Grant's Purse

the latter for several days, covering himself in some measure from censure, yet not furnishing the dormouse strategist any chance to forbid the attack."

§ 2

Retreating from Fort Heiman and Fort Henry the enemy brought up reinforcements and concentrated heavily at Fort Donelson with about 21,000 men. Grant, likewise summoning reinforcements, had about 17,000 men, so that when he had invested the fort there were more men engaged than had ever before fought on American soil. To endeavor to assault and reduce a fortified position with less combatants than the defense is against military tenets, but time was of the essence, Grant believing correctly, as it turned out, that 17,000 men in immediate momentum were worth three times that number later on. But he did not take the fort on the 8th, nor on the 9th, nor on the 10th. At Fort Henry Admiral Foote's Mississippi gunboats silenced the batteries before the troops arrived; but at Donelson after a serious repulse in which the Commodore was wounded, the navy had to fall back without being able to co-operate at all with the troops. In cruel February weather, without sufficient shelter, unsupported by the fleet (and at first outnumbered), Grant found himself facing an enemy with all the advantages of an impregnable shelter.

Foote, disabled on the flagboat many miles away, asked Grant to come to him. With Grant temporarily absent —there is not the slightest foundation to the assertion that he was drunk at the time—a fierce battle ensued in which the Union divisions under Generals McCler-

Grant's Last Stand

nand, Wallace and Smith, particularly McClernand on the right, were driven back. Grant wrote:

Just as I landed (this was coming back from the conference on the gunboat) I met Captain Hillyer of my staff, white with fear, not for his personal safety, but for the safety of the National troops. He said the enemy had come out of his lines in full force and attacked and scattered McClernand's division, which was in full retreat. . . .

I saw everything favorable for us along the line of our left and center. When I came to the right appearances were different. The enemy had come out in full force to cut his way out and make his escape. McClernand's division had to bear the brunt of the attack from this combined force. His men had stood up gallantly until the ammunition in their cartridge-boxes gave out. . . .

I saw the men standing in knots talking in the most excited manner. No officer seemed to be giving any directions. The soldiers had their muskets, but no ammunition, while there were tons of it close at hand. I heard some of the men say *that the enemy had come out with knapsacks, and Haversacks filled with rations.* [Italics author's.] They seemed to think this indicated a determination on his part to stay out and fight just as long as the provisions held out. I turned to Colonel J. D. Webster, of my staff, who was with me, and said: *"Some of our men are pretty badly demoralized, but the enemy must be more so, for he has attempted to force his way out, but has fallen back. The one who attacks first now will be victorious and the enemy will have to be in a hurry if he gets ahead of me."* [Italics author's.] I determined to make the assault at once on our left. . . .

I directed Colonel Webster to ride with me and call out to the men as we passed: "Fill your cartridge-boxes, quick, and get into line; the enemy is trying to escape and he must not be permitted to do so." This acted like a charm. The men only

Fort Donelson and Grant's Purse

wanted some one to give them a command. We rode rapidly to Smith's quarters, when I explained the situation to him and directed him to charge the enemy's works in his front with his whole division, saying at the same time that he would find nothing but a very thin line to contend with. The general was off in an incredibly short time, going in advance himself to keep his men from firing while they were working their way through the abatis intervening between them and the enemy. The outer line of rifle-pits was passed, and the night of the 15th General Smith, with much of his division, bivouacked within the lines of the enemy. There was now no doubt but that the Confederates must surrender or be captured the next day.

Of the hundreds of thousands of words that have been written about Fort Donelson there is perhaps no better account than the few hundred here so simply written by the sixty-three-year-old invalid. Not given to martial philosophy, Grant does not say that he started a new school of strategy: *i.e.*, that opposed to dependence upon fortifications as destructive of the morale of the inclosed army. Here were outnumbering troops just where they wanted to be, waiting for a long-expected attack,¹ yet unable to endure when the expected happened. Nor does Grant say that the difference between victory and defeat was the difference in leaders; — on the Confederate side Floyd, Pillow, and the more able Buckner, who stepped into command, and into blame, when the other two had thrown up their hands; on the other side Grant with his restless speed, his refusal to admit defeat, his burning need of victory, translated into calm orders to his command.

¹McCormick: *Ulysses S. Grant: The Great Soldier of America.*

Grant's Last Stand

At dawn next morning, with Federal battalions poised for the assault, came Buckner's request for armistice.

Headquarters, Fort Donelson,
February 16, 1862.

Sir: In consideration of all the circumstances governing the present situation of affairs at this station, I propose to the Commanding Officer of the Federal forces the appointment of Commissioners to agree upon terms of capitulation of the forces and fort under my command, and in that view suggest an armistice until 12 o'clock today.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your ob't se'v't,

S. B. BUCKNER,
Brig.-Gen. C. S. A.

To Brigadier-General U. S. Grant,
Com'ding U. S. Forces,
Near Fort Donelson.

Grant's answer was galvanic:

Headquarters Army in the Field,
Camp near Donelson,
February 16, 1862.

General S. B. Buckner,
Confederate Army.

Sir: Yours of this date, proposing armistice and appointment of Commissions to settle terms of capitulation, is just received. No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your ob't se'v't,

U. S. GRANT,
Brig.-Gen.

Fort Donelson and Grant's Purse

Buckner to Grant:

Headquarters, Dover, Tennessee,
February 16, 1862.

To Brig.-Gen'l U. S. Grant,
U. S. Army.

Sir: The distribution of the forces under my command, incident to an unexpected change of commanders, and the overwhelming force under your command, compel me, notwithstanding the brilliant success of the Confederate arms yesterday, to accept the ungenerous and unchivalrous terms which you propose.

I am, sir,

Your very ob't se'v't,

S. B. BUCKNER,
Brig.-Gen. C. S. A.

Buckner as stated had taken over command at the last moment. Floyd was afraid, not without reason, of Yankee vengeance in case of capture, for as Secretary of War of the United States he had been accused of removing arms from Northern arsenals and performing other treasonable acts. Both Floyd and Pillow, the next in command, "escaped by night" on the river. So the unpleasant duty fell on Buckner.

Buckner and Grant, old friends at West Point, and in Mexico, had an unofficial chat after the fight—one of those strange reunions between victor and vanquished that could have happened nowhere on earth except in a battle of the Civil War.

"If I had been in command," remarked Buckner, "you would not have got up to Fort Donelson so easily as you did."

Grant's Last Stand

"If you had been in command," replied Grant, "I should not have tried it in the way I did."

§ 3

And here occurred an incident which shows the reverse of the shield, an incident "off the record," not mentioned in the usual history books, least of all mentioned by Grant himself, ashamed of his human weaknesses. That in spite of Grant it is true can be verified by digging the dusty records where you will read General Buckner's own words:

Then General Grant "left the officers of his own army, and followed me, with that modest manner peculiar to himself, into the shadow, and there tendered me his purse. . . . It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that in the modesty of his nature he was afraid the light would witness that act of generosity, and sought to hide it from the world."³

³From a speech made by General Simon Buckner, April 27, 1889 at an anniversary dinner in honor of Grant's birthday, later quoted in *Campaigning with Grant*, by Horace Porter.

CHAPTER VII

The Depths at Shiloh

§ 1

WHILE Grant was laboring at his memoirs, and so far as can be ascertained at the time he was writing about the aftermath of the capture of Fort Donelson, he handed an undated memorandum to Doctor Douglas. In the course of it he says:

A verb is anything that signifies to be; to do; or to suffer. I signify all three.

"A verb is anything that signifies to be; to do; or to suffer. I signify all three."

It is the writer's belief that Grant was a verb throughout his life, though sometimes an inactive verb. It was only in the later years that he learned to express his feelings, and then to a few intimates. Doctor Douglas was one of them.

There is no question that he suffered as an aftermath of Fort Donelson due to a combination of circumstances: poor communications, his own energy; and particularly army jealousy. While yet before Donelson he had been assigned to head the District of West Tennessee with

Grant's Last Stand

limits not defined. The capture of Donelson had dented the Confederate line as far as Nashville, which was soon to be given up. Grant on February 28 wired Halleck that, without orders to the contrary, he should go to Nashville to confer with General Buell. The wire was held up at Cairo, possibly through error, possibly through jealousy. A fatal thing for Grant. He went to Nashville, returning to Donelson the next day. On March 3 Grant ordered his whole command on Fort Henry, preparatory to an expedition up the Tennessee River to capture Corinth, which was now the spearhead of the Confederacy's new Hindenburg line. Consider his astonishment the next day on receiving this wire from Halleck:

"You will place Maj.-Gen. C. F. Smith in command of expedition, and remain yourself at Fort Henry. Why do you not obey my orders to report strength and positions of your command?" Grant endeavored to explain, but on March 6 came another dispatch: "Your neglect of repeated orders to report the strength of your command has created great dissatisfaction and seriously interfered with military plans. Your going to Nashville without authority, and when your presence with your troops was of the utmost importance, was a matter of very serious complaint at Washington, so much so that I was advised to arrest you on your return." Grant, still ignorant of the trouble, wired: "Every move I made was reported daily to your chief of staff, who must have failed to keep you properly posted. I have done my very best to obey orders and to carry out the interests of the service. If my course is not satisfactory remove me at once. I do not wish in any way to impede the success of our arms.

The Depths at Shiloh

. . . My going to Nashville was strictly intended for the good of the service, and not to gratify any desire of my own. Believing sincerely that I must have enemies between you and myself who are trying to impair my usefulness, I respectfully asked to be relieved from further duty in the department."

There were more messages back and forth between Grant and Halleck and many between Halleck and Washington; but Grant still asked to be relieved—in other words for examination of the matter. Finally, pressed by Lincoln for a report, Halleck respectfully requested that no further notice be taken of the matter, since Grant had apparently acted "from a praiseworthy although mistaken zeal for the public service."

Grant believed he was under obligation to Halleck. It was not until years later that he discovered what had been going on behind his back. While giving his subordinate the impression that he was endeavoring to "pull Grant's chestnuts out of the fire" Halleck was in reality kicking them farther in, as the following will show:

Halleck to General McClellan, the Chief-of-Staff at Washington:

Smith, by his coolness and bravery at Fort Donelson, when the battle was against us, turned the tide and carried the enemy's outworks. Make him a Major-General. You can't get a better one. Honor him for this victory, and the whole country will applaud.

Halleck to McClellan, March 2, 1862:

I have had no communication with General Grant for over a week. He left his command without my authority and went to

Grant's Last Stand

Nashville. It is hard to censure a successful general immediately after a victory but I think he richly deserves it. I can get no returns, no reports, no information of any kind from him. Satisfied with his victory he sits down and enjoys it without any regard for the future.

And again Halleck to McClellan on March 4:

A rumor has just reached me that since the taking of Fort Donelson Grant has resumed his former bad habits. If so it will account for his repeated neglect of my oft-repeated orders. I do not deem it advisable to arrest him at present, but have placed General Smith in command of the expedition up the Tennessee. I think Smith will restore order and discipline.

In spite of the grand army game which was going on at Grant's expense, the soldiers, the people and, what is more important, Congressman Washburne recognized Grant as the victor of Donelson. Furthermore Grant had the loyal support of his subordinate William T. Sherman, who was yet to become famous, and of that gentlemanly old figure, General C. F. Smith,¹ who was to die a few weeks later. It was Smith himself who though older in service and lower in rank said to Grant: "I know a soldier's duty. I hope you will feel no awkwardness about our new relations."

Grant's own view of the matter, seen through the haze of years, is interesting. He was inclined at the time to agree with Halleck's estimate (of Smith as an officer superior to himself). "But this did not justify the dispatches which General Halleck sent to Washington, or

¹The same General Smith who instructed Cadet Grant at West Point and who remained Grant's hero to the end.

The Depths at Shiloh

his subsequent concealment of them from me when pretending to explain the action of my superiors."

Nevertheless, Grant's commission as major-general came forward. It came in time to make him responsible for further difficulties, this time for the disputed and bloody battle of Shiloh which is still refought whenever army men gather around the embers.

§ 2

By the time Grant was reinstated with the troops in the field, the army had moved up the Tennessee River toward Corinth, under Generals C. F. Smith, Buell and McLernand. Grant ranked all except Halleck, and could work well with Smith. When the latter was incapacitated, the brave but imperious and oratorical McLernand was substituted. When Grant notified Halleck that he intended to move on Corinth on March 23 or 24 the senior officer ruled:

"Corinth cannot be taken without a general engagement which, from your instructions, is to be avoided." Difficult as it may be to diagnose a man's motives, it seems from study of the documents that Halleck expected sooner or later to capture Corinth, but at a time of his own choosing and in such a manner that he could personally be considered as the victor. To Grant, speed was always a governing factor. In looking back on this period Grant wrote:

My opinion was and still is that immediately after the fall of Fort Donelson the way was opened to the National forces

Grant's Last Stand

all over the Southwest without much resistance. If one general who would have taken the responsibility had been in command of all the troops west of the Alleghanies, he could have marched to Chattanooga, Corinth, Memphis, and Vicksburg with the troops we then had, and as volunteering was going on rapidly over the North there would soon have been force enough at all these centers to operate offensively against any body of the enemy that might be found near them. . . . Providence ruled differently. Time was given the enemy to collect armies and fortify his new positions.

A book could be devoted to the Battle of Shiloh alone. We shall reduce the situation to its essence. Though actually in command it should be understood that Grant had recently been chastised, had perhaps not yet regained his confidence nor the confidence of his officers, had not yet formed the close knit group which later became the Grant hierarchy, was suffering from an ankle crushed when his horse slipped and rolled on him in the mud. Furthermore, Grant's friend General Smith was in the hospital; and General McLernand, a volunteer reserve officer, was later to dispute command with Grant. Among all these cross-currents, and put unexpectedly on the defensive, Grant got off to a poor start. He redeemed himself on the second day.

He took up his headquarters at Savannah, commuting every morning to Pittsburg Landing, where the troops — five divisions under General W. H. L. Wallace (substituting for Smith), Sherman, McLernand, Hurlburt, and Lew Wallace — were encamped. Grant has been severely, perhaps justly, criticized, for remaining so far from the front. Exactly why the commanding officer

The Depths at Shiloh

elected to spend the nights at Savannah when his command was eight miles away on the opposite side of the river, is hard to say. Grant states in his memoirs that he wished to confer with Buell the moment the latter arrived at Savannah and so waited at the latter point. General Buell was under orders to join them at Savannah, coming from Columbia eighty-five miles away with 40,000 veterans.

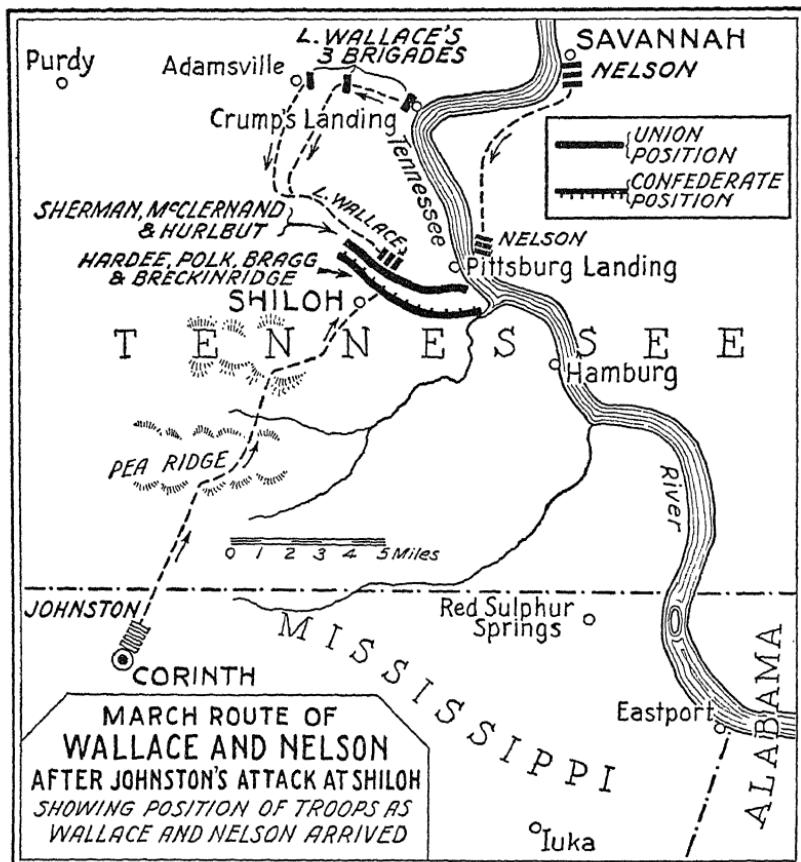
Buell did arrive on the evening of April 5 but did not immediately notify Grant. Apparently Buell did not relish being put under Grant's wing. Grant's detractors, however, say that he knew Buell had arrived but made no efforts to see him.

§ 3

April 6th, 1863.

A warm spring morning, pacified by a southern haze stealing from the river banks of the Tennessee, was suddenly broken. Musketry rattled, artillery boomed from the direction of Pittsburg Landing. Grant rose hastily, penned a note for Buell, counselling him to make haste, boarded a dispatch boat, stopped a moment at Crump's Landing to tell Lew Wallace to get his troops in line, and arrived at the front "about 8 A.M." Some writers who liked to traduce Grant say that he arrived in the middle of the forenoon. Captain Baxter of Grant's staff was sent back to order Lew Wallace to march immediately to Pittsburg Landing by the road nearest the river. At 1 P.M., when Union disaster was still imminent, Wallace had not yet arrived. He had taken a roundabout

Grant's Last Stand



Adapted, with author's permission, from Ulysses S. Grant: *The Great Soldier of America*, by Robert R. McCormick

road, which he claimed to the day of his death that he had been ordered to take.² Buell himself arrived about

²In a footnote to the *Memoirs* General Grant quotes a letter from General Wallace's widow giving an explanation of her husband's tardiness. Grant comments, "This modifies very materially what I have said and what has been said by others, of the conduct of General Lew Wallace at the Battle of Shiloh. It shows that he naturally, with no more experience than he had at the time in the profession of arms, would take the particular road that he did start upon in the absence of orders to move by a different road.

The Depths at Shiloh

the middle of the day; but his regiments did not swing upon the scene until the first day's battle was over.

General Johnston, the Confederate commander, had wisely decided to come out and attack the loosely organized Union troops before Buell could join them. He nearly succeeded in a great victory. Out of the woods in early morning rushed the hordes of Confederates storming on the Union tents where the men were at mess. The supporting regiments allowed the panic-stricken front line to pass them. Terrified men fled back to the river and hid under its high banks. There was no possibility of a counter-offensive since all of Grant's troops were engaged. Sherman and McLernand gave ground slowly in retreat and Prentiss held fast for many hours in what was later known as the "hornet's nest." Eventually just before aid came he surrendered his command of 2400 men. Robert McCormick compares Grant's dispatch to Buell with Wellington's prayer at Waterloo for "Blücher or night." "Both generals," comments McCormick, "were accused of being surprised, and Grant could have replied, as did Wellington, 'Well, what if I was surprised; I beat him, didn't I?'"

When Grant first landed at the scene he was greeted by indescribable confusion and the doleful sight of hundreds of those skulkers lining the river bank for a half a mile. Once ashore he saw to it that the ammunition train was ready to supply those at the front, then, according to his friend General Charles King, "Mounting he rode forward."

In this superb ability of Grant's to hold himself together at moments when others disintegrated lay the key

Grant's Last Stand

to his success. Slow as may have been his start, faulty as may have been the disposition of his troops, doubtful as may have been the wisdom of his sleeping at Pittsburg Landing with the command miles away, whether or not he was taken by surprise, the fact remains that even in this battle of Shiloh which found him at his worst, whatever his minor fears he did not outwardly betray them. Beaten back he recoiled for a new spring. When Buell, arriving ahead of his troops, asked what disposition Grant had made for retreat the latter replied, "I haven't despaired of whipping them yet"—and I believe that Buell, critical as he was of Grant's ability and strongly as he believed that it was his arrival which turned the tide of battle, overlooked the importance of that quiet, "I haven't despaired of whipping them yet." Over and over again we discover that trait. Grant was almost taken by the evening sortie at Donelson; he was almost beaten at Shiloh; he was almost beaten at the battle of the Wilderness (which as we shall see was the most dramatic chapter of all) but in each case when many events so indicated, still he had not despaired.

When Grant was making his last stand writing his *Memoirs* in the race against death, he treated first, because the publishers asked for it, the disputed battle of Shiloh. Behind the scenes he was writing the pitiful notes to Doctor Douglas of which we shall have more later. There is no direct discussion of whether he was surprised in the military sense. But of Prentiss's capture he does say this: "In one of the backward moves, on the 6th, the division commanded by General Prentiss did not

The Depths at Shiloh

fall back with the others. This left his flanks exposed and enabled the enemy to capture him with about two thousand two hundred of his officers and men. General Badeau gives four o'clock of the sixth as about the time this capture took place. He may be right as to the time, but my recollection is that the hour was later. General Prentiss himself gave the hour as half-past five. I was with him, as I was with each of the division commanders that day, several times, and my recollection is that the last time I was with him was about half-past four, when his division was standing up firmly and the General was as cool as if expecting victory. But no matter whether it was four or later, the story that he and his command were surprised and captured in their camps is without any foundation whatever. If it had been true, as currently reported at the time and yet believed by thousands of people, that Prentiss and his division had been captured in their beds, there would not have been an all-day struggle, with the loss of thousands killed and wounded on the Confederate side."

There is also one comment by Grant obviously directed at the belief that Buell saved the day: "Buell's loss on the 6th of April was two men killed and one wounded, all members of the 36th Indiana Infantry. The Army of the Tennessee lost on that day at least seven thousand men. *The presence of two or three regiments of Buell's army on the west bank before firing ceased had not the slightest effect in preventing the capture of Pittsburg Landing.* (Italics are the author's.)

"So confident was I before firing had ceased on the 6th that the next day would bring victory to our arms

Grant's Last Stand

if we could only take the initiative, that I visited each division commander in person before any reinforcements had reached the field."

§ 4

In 1884, when Mr. R. U. Johnson, editor of the Century Company, read the first draft of Grant's account of Shiloh, he asked the General to add personal touches. With great difficulty and some display of tact, Mr. Johnson convinced the General that people were interested in such details. So the aged warrior wrote on his pad:³

"During the night [of the first day's battle] rain fell in torrents and our troops were exposed to the storm without shelter. I made my headquarters under a tree a few hundred yards back from the river bank. My ankle was so much swollen from the fall of my horse the Friday night preceding, and the bruise was so painful, that I could get no rest. The drenching rain would have precluded the possibility of sleep without this additional cause. Some time after midnight, growing restive under the storm and the continuous pain, I moved back to the log-house under the bank. This had been taken as a hospital, and all night wounded men were being brought in, their wounds dressed, a leg or an arm amputated as the case might require, and everything being done to save life or alleviate suffering. The sight was more unendurable than encountering the enemy's fire, and I returned to my tree in the rain."

³As explained elsewhere Grant sometimes wrote on a pad, sometimes dictated, his *Memoirs*, from which, unless otherwise stated, the quotations from Grant are taken. The notes to Douglas and others are, with few exceptions, little slips of paper. Occasionally the longer ones are written on regular letter-size paper.

The Depths at Shiloh

In this way did a wise editor coax the dying General to add those little asides,³ those human touches which lay concealed behind the soldier's mask, and pierced from time to time, like streaks of sunset hue, the thundering barrage of battle facts.

³I refer to a few months later, when Grant was writing the final chapters.

CHAPTER VIII

In Disgrace—Sherman Stretches a Hand

LIKE a good many simple men Grant was an enigma. He could not bear the sight of blood, yet he could order thousands to death without a change of voice. As a rule imperturbable and slow of movement, he could, when aroused, move faster, more consecutively, more relentlessly than any captain known to modern warfare. He hated the glamour and excitement of battle, yet, and perhaps for that very reason, he functioned perfectly in its midst. He had no taste for music, but many persons have testified to his vibrant, musical voice. Apparently not wanting political office as a soldier he quieted Lincoln's fear of a rival, sensed the administration's plans and problems and acted accordingly. He disliked politics, yet in his second term in the White House, became, according to some viewpoints, part of one of the most partisan political machines of many administrations. At the end of the second term he was profoundly disgusted with public life; yet he was chagrined when the third term movement went glimmering. Years later when editor Johnson expected to find him "stolid and reserved," Johnson was astonished and said that "no man of letters could more openly have worn his heart upon his sleeve." Reputedly a thick-skinned man, Grant's personal notes to Douglas and others reveal, it seems, a thoughtful patient and a nature rarely sensitive.

In Disgrace—Sherman Stretches a Hand

But in his conduct of the war it was above all this trait first exhibited at Shiloh—this ghastly ability to absorb punishment and still not give ground which shook the North and called down on him a rain of criticism. One recalls Grant's boyhood confession: "One of my superstitions had always been . . . when I started to do anything, not to turn back or stop until the thing intended was accomplished." Twelve thousand men were wounded or killed on the Union side alone, not counting captives; and when the reports trickled over the country, the Northern press began to call him "Butcher Grant." In his *Memoirs* Grant admits:

Shiloh was the severest battle fought at the West during the war, and but few in the East equalled it for hard, determined fighting. I saw an open field, in our possession on the second day, over which the Confederates had made repeated charges the day before, so covered with dead that it would have been possible to walk across the clearing, in any direction, stepping on dead bodies, without a foot touching the ground. . . . On one part, which had evidently not been ploughed for several years, probably because the land was poor, bushes had grown up, some to the height of eight or ten feet. There was not one of these left standing unpierced by bullets.

If Grant had been kept in command he would have followed the Confederate army to Corinth and moved toward Vicksburg along a two-front line. He was not retained in command. Even Lincoln moved cautiously in view of the popular clamor against Grant, and while not removing Grant from command, sent his superior, Halleck, to the scene of action so that Grant was actu-

Grant's Last Stand

ally, though not nominally, on the shelf. Halleck crept toward Corinth, making certain in advance that each foot was resting on solid ground, and when pressed by the jobless Grant to move on Vicksburg before Vicksburg could be strengthened, telling his subordinate that "When your advice is needed it will be asked." Grant's position was intolerable. He had time to hear the furious barking of the newspapers with all the revived gossip of his drinking and inefficiency; he had nothing to do and no one to command except a personal staff consisting primarily of Rawlins and Rowley to whom there were no necessary orders to give. He did not know, did not have the comfort of knowing, that when Secretary of War Stanton piled high on Lincoln's desk reports of Grant's shortcomings the Great Emancipator-to-be marked time with the reply, "The man fights. I think we'll keep him a little longer."¹ (There appears to be no foundation for the clever reply then or since invented for Lincoln: "I wish I could find the kind of whiskey Grant drinks and send it to my other generals.")

The reports of Grant's subordinates at the battle of Shiloh, or Pittsburg Landing, were forwarded through Halleck to the War Department without permitting Grant to see them, consequently he himself refused to make a full report. After Halleck's arrival he was as completely ignored as if he had been at some distant point. In answer to a suggestion in regard to the time and manner of General Pope's movement, Grant recalls: "I was silenced so quickly that I felt that possibly I had suggested an unmilitary movement." He stood the humili-

¹Adam Badeau: *Military History of U. S. Grant.*

In Disgrace—Sherman Stretches a Hand

iation as long as he could. He was about to quit the service so far as Halleck's jurisdiction was concerned. He writhed inwardly but as always answered no word except to request his father, who had given several irate interviews to the press, to quiet down. To Washburne, his Illinois sponsor in Congress, he wrote:

"I would scorn being my own defender . . . except through the record . . . of all my official acts. . . . To say that I have not been distressed . . . would be false. . . . One thing I will assure you of, however: I cannot be driven from rendering the best service within my ability to suppress the present rebellion." Even in writing his *Memoirs* Grant appears loath or unable to express his feelings on the aftermath of Shiloh except for some remarks whose full significance lies between the lines. He was at the point of breaking, did in fact apply for a thirty-day leave, which might have had unforetold results, when his good friend Sherman suspected that all was not well.

"I inquired for the General," says Sherman,² "and was shown to his tent, where I found him seated on a camp-table. . . . I inquired if it were true that he was going away. He said, 'Yes.' I then inquired the reason, and he said: 'Sherman, you know. You know that I am in the way here. I have stood it as long as I can, and can endure it no longer. . . .'"

"I then begged him to stay, illustrating his case by my own. Before the battle of Shiloh, I had been cast down by a mere newspaper assertion. . . . He . . . promised to wait. . . . Very soon after this . . . I re-

²*Memoirs of William T. Sherman.*

Grant's Last Stand

ceived a note from him, saying that he . . . would remain."

Thus did Sherman at the right time stretch his hand to Grant, and help him rise from Shiloh, and go on to Vicksburg, Chattanooga, and Appomattox.³

³Owen Wister's short biography in the Beacon Series.

CHAPTER IX

The Heights at Vicksburg

§ 1

BEFORE entering the stupendous Vicksburg campaign we must pause for a moment to look at the man who is writing about it. Grant's first article on the battle of Shiloh had met with great success and the editors had voluntarily doubled his pay of \$500 per article. Doctor Douglas's diary describes Grant at this time. The success of the articles led to the plan for a book, and the controversy, which we shall describe in its proper place, between Mark Twain and the Century Company for the book rights. He was deep in his third career—that of man of letters. He worked faster now, because the pains in his throat recurred faster, and because he was spurred by the sense of achievement. When he returned to the city from Long Branch in the autumn of 1884 he was surrounded by records, maps, diagrams of all sorts. His son, Frederick Dent Grant, was of great assistance and he relied on General Adam Badeau as well as the latter's already published biography. When toward the latter part of Volume I he takes up the Vicksburg campaign—the very sweatshop of Grant's achievement, which, in fact, was to remove all doubts of his fitness—one senses more speed and confidence in the writing, the statements are less qualified and explanatory.

The soundness of Sherman's advice, that Grant had

Grant's Last Stand

better swallow his pride and retain his position at least in name, was soon apparent. After the vapid capture of Corinth (which Halleck later had the grace to admit was insured by Grant's victory at Pittsburg Landing) Halleck was promoted to Chief-of-Staff, with headquarters at Washington. Grant, next in line, was automatically left in command of the Armies of the Mississippi and the Tennessee. Hereafter he was hampered less from above than by the cross-currents within his own districts.

Throughout the early part of the Vicksburg campaign military and civil enemies continued to clamor to Lincoln for Grant's removal. As at Pittsburg Landing, Grant inherited a bad situation and was slow in getting under way. The elements were against him. The always uncertain Mississippi River was swollen with winter rains, covered with trees and logs, and the fortress of Vicksburg, which had been thinly fortified when he first cast his eye upon it, had by this time become almost impregnable. It stood on a high bluff overlooking "The Father of Waters." It was the Confederate Rock of Gibraltar.

Not only was Grant's army on the opposite side of the river from his objective but its ranks were torn with jealousy. Just as the allies on the Western Front were unable to operate as a unit until Foch was raised to the top of the pyramid, so the Union cause was uncorrelated until Grant won his way to that position. General McLernand, who received his rank after Grant, but considered himself superior, was the chief stumblingblock. Lincoln was in part responsible for the confusion. Influenced no doubt by McLernand's persuasive personality, his political "usefulness," and by the clamor against



Grant as Captain while stationed at Sackett's Harbor, N. Y.,
1849, age 27 (from a very small miniature)



Property of Lt. Frank Parker, Cairo, Ill.

Grant after Vicksburg campaign

Note the strained look. This was taken after Grant fell from his horse
in New Orleans

The Heights at Vicksburg

Grant encouraged by McLernand, Lincoln allowed the latter to organize an independent expedition to clear the Mississippi. Lincoln, however, was canny enough to withhold entire authority, for, although apparently giving McLernand a free hand, he did so providing that "when a sufficient force not required by the operations of General Grant's command shall be raised, an expedition may be organized under General McLernand's command against Vicksburg and to clear the Mississippi River and open navigation to New Orleans."

Now McLernand was a fearless man, a self-willed man, and the only corps commander who wanted to risk a fight when Grant did not. His difficulty was that he could never get into his head that Grant was boss; and he further deceived himself into thinking that the administration would back him in the last analysis. The South-western Department had by this time been divided into four Army Corps with McLernand head of the 13th, Sherman of the 15th, Hurlburt of the 16th, and McPherson of the 17th; all, however, a part of the Tennessee under command of Grant. Both the Ohio "regulars" were devoted to Grant, and the Illinois volunteers were not. According to General King, McLernand was forced into Grant's Vicksburg campaign "an embittered and disappointed man"—feeling that his own ideas had been absorbed, as probably they were, into Grant's network.

In this situation, according to General King, "While Grant was ever courteous and considerate in all his dealings with McLernand—calling him into conference quite as much as he did his other corps commanders, and

Grant's Last Stand

inviting his presence whenever he invited theirs—it was noted that McLernand preserved at all times a stiff, formal, and distant manner toward his chief. It became noticeable that McLernand early in the campaign displayed irritation and annoyance whenever he received an order from Grant, that he was slow and indifferent as to obeying. Little by little the breach seemed to widen, notwithstanding the efforts of Rawlins and Wilson, both of whom held McLernand in esteem and admiration for his many strong, virile, and valuable traits, and in spite of Rawlins's every effort so to word every letter, order, or endorsement as to give McLernand no excuse whatever for misunderstanding, misunderstandings would occur — McLernand seemed determined to take offense."

It was open to McLernand either to ask to be relieved or else to keep still and serve loyally. He did neither. Grant overlooked the defection in several instances. At one time McLernand arranged a spectacular dress parade when fighting was close, and at another time swore at Wilson, who brought him instructions from Grant, "I'll be Goddamned if I will do it—I am tired of being dictated to." Finally, after one of the unsuccessful assaults in which both Sherman and McPherson were defeated McLernand entered into one more attack, which was also repulsed. McLernand then issued through the press, and without knowledge of his superior, a congratulatory order to his own troops quite slighting to the other armies and in language insulting to Grant. The other Grant generals—for by this time a Grant clique was coming into its own—obtained from Grant an order relieving McLernand from command. Staff Officer Wil-

The Heights at Vicksburg

son delivered this at about 2 o'clock in the morning of May 18, because as he later stated he feared there might be another engagement on the next day in which McLernand would so distinguish himself that it would be impossible to make the order effective. McLernand, aroused from his cot at this unusual hour with the information that there was a message from the Army commander, knew what was in the wind. He dressed with great care and received Wilson, who handed him the order. McLernand perused it.

"I see I am relieved," said McLernand, with dignity.

A moment's pause. "By God, sir, we are both relieved!" remarked Wilson, and strode from the tent.

After Vicksburg, McLernand continued his attack on Grant, asking both for an investigation and for another command for himself. Having backed both horses until Grant was clearly in the lead, Lincoln now refused both McLernand's requests, albeit kindly. McLernand remained in the disgrace which war heaps upon its unfortunates. For so able and heroic a commander it was one of the personal tragedies of the war.

In two other directions, outside of the McLernand difficulty, Grant showed political acumen. There was great to do in civil as well as military circles about the employment of Negro troops. Grant's entire willingness to make use of them strengthened him with the abolitionists and with the administration. Lincoln also had a favorite scheme for diverting the channel of the river away from the fort, a scheme which had been tried and given up. Grant continued this hopeless assignment in deference to the known wishes of the Commander-in-

Grant's Last Stand

Chief, a tactful move which not only kept the troops busy, but permitted McLernand to grind his nose on a hopeless project.

§ 2

Early efforts against Vicksburg came under the head of noble experiments. The problem in January, 1863, was how to secure a foothold on the east bank of the Mississippi without apparent retreat. The North, as stated, was discouraged and clamoring, not only for victories, but for a change in generals. "Then commenced a series of experiments," Grant writes, "to consume time, and to divert the attention of the enemy, of my troops, and of the public generally. I, myself, never felt great confidence that any of the experiments resorted to would prove successful. Nevertheless, I was always prepared to take advantage of them in case they did."

The Union Army and Navy could make no headway against the bluffs east of the Yazoo River, and finally gave up because of the network of bayous and tangled morass. The Navy, as always, co-operated well with Grant, until Admiral Porter's gunboats got hopelessly tangled and battered. Porter summed up the situation in a single sentence: "I never yet saw vessels so well adapted to knocking down trees, hauling them up by the roots, or demolishing bridges." A sort of floating tank was what they needed. One of Grant's trials during this period was of advantage because he learned that if necessary he could subsist without a base, and as always the experience was tucked away for future use. In his impatience Secretary of War Stanton did an unwise thing.

The Heights at Vicksburg

He tried to bribe each of three brigadier-generals by promising to make the one who first achieved victory in an important battle a major-general in the regular army. An interesting sidelight on the character of the three soldiers involved is given in the words of Coolidge: "Rosecrans, commanding the Army of the Cumberland in Tennessee, wrote a petulant reply. Hooker promptly led the Army of the Potomac to humiliating defeat at Chancellorsville. Grant ignored the letter; he did not let it hasten him or influence his course."

Finally Grant conceived the bold and daring plan of enveloping Vicksburg from the southern side—a plan so unusual when viewed suddenly that most of his subordinates, including Sherman, were doubtful. It required three factors, each successful. First, the Navy must run from the north the gauntlet of Vicksburg forts—a task supposedly as formidable as running the Hudson River past West Point—; secondly, the Army must march miles down the western side of the Mississippi and be ferried across below Vicksburg without knowledge of the enemy; thirdly, the attacking force must cut loose from the base of subsistence. "I can do my part," said Porter, "and will, regardless of losses."

On the fateful, and unfortunately moonlight night of April 16 the vanguard of Porter's little fleet hoisted anchor. The clear light, in addition to the flash of cannon, but mostly the destruction of houses and cabins along the shore which soon burst out in flame, helped to focus the floating targets. Miraculously, and with no loss of life, the leaders got through with the exception of one boat. Other craft followed later.

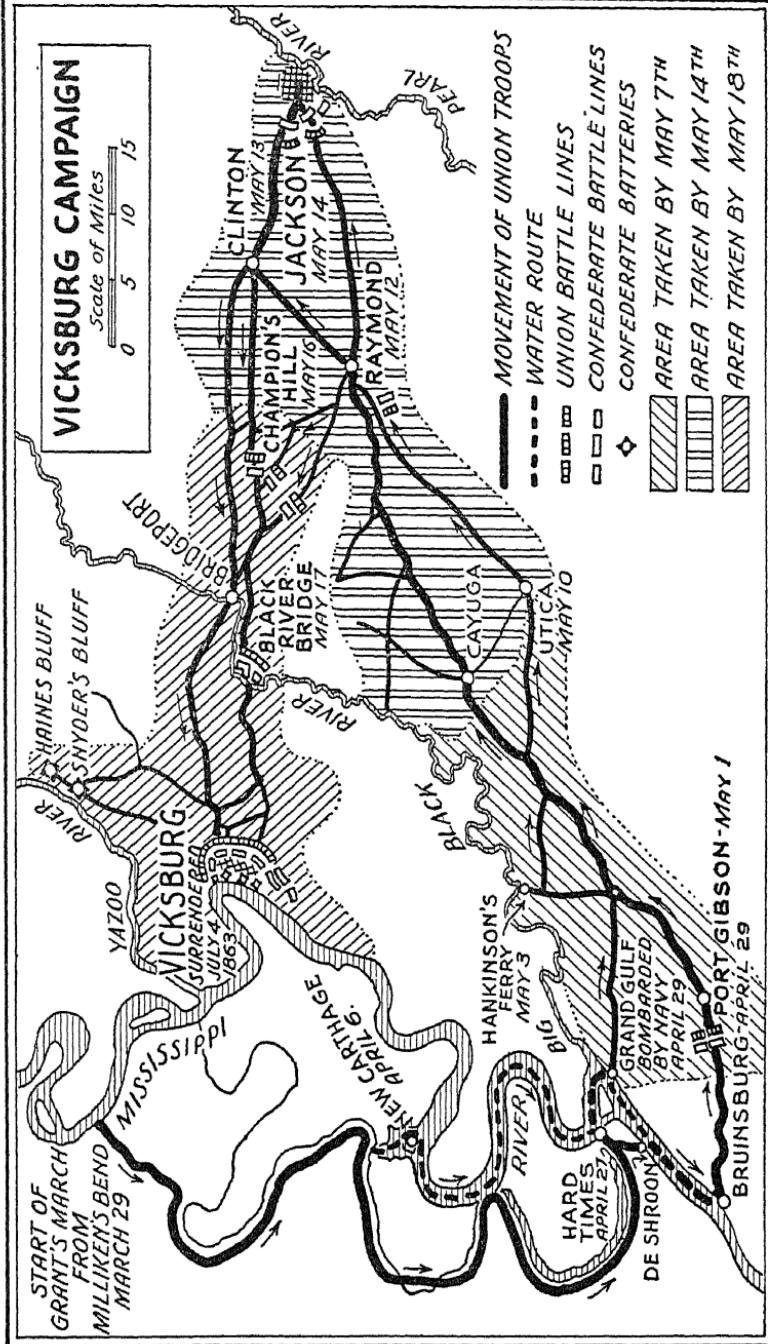
Grant's Last Stand

The Army meantime trudged down the western bank by a circuitous route, intending to go all the way down to Rodney. At the last moment, to his enormous delight, the commanding officer learned from a spy that it would be possible to cross at Bruinsburg, a saving of a few miles. Grant's yellow pad gives us an insight to his feelings:

When this landing was effected I felt a degree of relief scarcely ever equalled since. Vicksburg was not yet taken, it is true, nor were its defenders demoralized by any of our previous moves. I was now in the enemy's country, with a vast river and the stronghold of Vicksburg between me and my base of supplies. But I was on dry ground on the same side of the river with the enemy. All the campaigns, labors, hardships and exposures from the month of December previous to this time that had been made and endured were for the accomplishment of this one object.

At once there began a succession of rapid, daring blows probably unequalled in the history of warfare. Grant immediately took Port Gibson and not notifying "Old Brains" Halleck until too late for the latter to order safe procedure, he cut loose from his base of supplies in an advance on all fronts upon Vicksburg itself. Next he moved northeastward to Jackson, the capital, caught Joseph E. Johnston before Pemberton could join him, then turning back on Pemberton almost captured the latter at Champion's Hill. Many believe he would have taken Pemberton at that time had it not been for McLernand's insubordination.

Grant, usually a serene man, could not on this occasion stand the suspense and, mounting a horse, rode seventy-five miles downstream to meet the intrepid Porter and



Adapted, with author's permission, from Ulysses S. Grant: The Great Soldier of America, by Robert R. McCormick

Grant's Last Stand

discuss the necessary details for further action. The next day saw him retrace the seventy-five miles, almost killing his mount. "My husband," remarked Julia Grant at this time, "is a very obstinate man." In 18 days he marched 200 miles, won 5 pitched battles, took 8000 prisoners and 80 cannon, scattered a rebel army larger than his own, fighting on its own ground, and penned it up in Vicksburg. (Coolidge.)

Grant's hour of darkness came when he heard that Banks would not be able to co-operate with him until May 10, and then with only 15,000 men. In this situation, which nullified all his previous speed and meant a delay which was not to be tolerated, most men would have crumbled, but to Grant it acted as a tonic for greater speed and daring. He planned to place himself at once between Pemberton and reinforcements, defeating each segment in detail. This he did. Sherman wanted Grant to wait for wagon trains, to which Grant wrote in answer: "I do not calculate upon the possibility of supplying the army with full rations from Grand Gulf. I know it will be impossible without constructing additional roads. What I do expect is to get up what rations of hard bread, coffee, and salt we can, and make the country furnish the balance."

When Vicksburg was surrounded he quickly made two assaults, both of which failed. In the entire 1031 pages of the General's *Memoirs* he makes several statements such as "I thought at the time and still believe" so and so. He apologizes for only two mistakes, and the first is an expression of regret that the second assault at Vicksburg was ordered, since lives were lost, and no appreci-

The Heights at Vicksburg

able result gained. At that General Lawler, the 250-pound brave Roman Catholic from Shawneetown, Illinois, and hero of Black River Bridge, almost succeeded in storming the works. The action thereupon resolved itself into a siege.

Food supply within the beleaguered city was limited. Shells began to fall at regular intervals. Grant was in position to receive reinforcements, while the defenders were not. It lasted forty-five days longer before Pemberton asked for terms.

On the morning of July 4, 1863, Pemberton in evil humor surrendered 31,000 men and 172 pieces of artillery. Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War and observer for the War Department, wired to Stanton: "Grant was received by Pemberton with marked impertinence. . . . He bore it like a philosopher." Apparently Pemberton was governed by the idea that although he must surrender to this bushwhacker he would do so with condescension. He remained seated with his staff when Grant came up to the verandah on which they sat. But as a foreign observer, Comte de Paris, put it, "As victory put Grant in a position to be indifferent to this, he affected not to notice it, and, addressing Pemberton, asked him how many rations were needed for his army." Later Pemberton wrote that he purposely timed the surrender for July 4, realizing that the enemy's vanity (meaning Grant's) would cause him to give better terms on that day. A curious statement!

CHAPTER X

Interlude

§ 1

GRANT wrote enough to fill a small book about the Vicksburg campaign alone. Working, as we have said, faster, because he was now more certain of himself as a writer and because he wanted to break the back of the task before he was incapacitated by illness, he devoted 163 pages, or nearly 38,000 words, to this phase. He says in his introduction: "The first volume, as well as a portion of the second, was written before I had reason to suppose I was in a critical condition of health. Later I was reduced almost to the point of death, and it became impossible for me to attend to anything for weeks. I have, however, somewhat regained my strength, and am able, often, to devote as many hours a day as a person should devote to such work. I would have more hope of satisfying the expectation of the public if I could have allowed myself more time."

Yet it was on October 22, 1884, not long after he started the book itself, that he visited Doctor Douglas, who later diagnosed the throat difficulty as an "Epithelioma of the Squamous variety," and Grant appears to have guessed what the doctor already knew, that it was dread cancer. Perhaps he did not know he was a stricken man when he began the magazine articles; but he certainly knew his days were limited when he began the book.

Interlude

In spite of the criticism of certain writers that Grant's book is "dry as a haystack," it contains the exact information that every one wanted to know by the one person qualified to give it. The *Memoirs* are factual rather than imaginative; there is in evidence no desire to make the author a legendary character. Some military writers, like the late author of *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, delight in building up personal mystery. Grant, on the contrary, dissipates legend whenever possible. Yet the human touches crop out from time to time, expressed in Grant's guarded way.

Can one, for example, imagine a Cæsar or a Napoleon pausing in the midst of the recital of a breathtaking campaign to give this bit of information? Is not the proud father revealed in every sentence?

On leaving Bruinsburg for the front I left my son Frederick, who had joined me a few weeks before, on board one of the gunboats asleep, and hoped to get away without him until after Grand Gulf should fall into our hands; but on waking up he learned that I had gone, and being guided by the sound of the battle raging at Thompson's Hill—called the Battle of Port Gibson—found his way to where I was. He had no horse to ride at the time, and I had no facilities for even preparing a meal. He therefore, foraged around the best he could until we reached Grand Gulf. Mr. C. A. Dana, then an officer of the War Department, accompanied me on the Vicksburg campaign and through a portion of the siege. He was in the same situation as Fred so far as transportation and mess arrangements were concerned. The first time I call to mind seeing either of them, after the battle, they were mounted on two enormous horses, grown white from age, each equipped with dilapidated saddles and bridles.

Grant's Last Stand

Our trains arrived a few days later, after which we were all perfectly equipped.

My son accompanied me throughout the campaign and siege, and caused no anxiety either to me or to his mother, who was at home. He looked out for himself and was in every battle of the campaign. His age, then not quite thirteen, enabled him to take in all he saw, and to retain a recollection of it that would not be possible in more mature years.

Immediately after Vicksburg had been invested and before the siege and capture, floods of Northern visitors began to pour in. It is difficult for us to imagine the loose civil organization existent at the time, the lack of press censorship, and the ease with which spies could move about. The comparatively short range of the artillery (and of course no airplanes) made it possible for non-combatants to approach close to the opposing lines. That the military-minded Grant objected to this there is good evidence in the memoirs:

I always admired the South, as bad as I thought their cause, for the boldness with which they silenced all opposition and all croaking, by press or by individuals, within their control. War at all times, whether a civil war between sections of a common country or between nations, ought to be avoided, if possible with honor. But, once entered into, it is too much for human nature to tolerate an enemy within their ranks to give aid and comfort to the armies of the opposing section or nation.

The verbose and choleric Sherman was much less restrained, calling the reporters "little whippersnappers who represent the press, but are in fact spies in our camps." It is evidence of Grant's tact as well as acumen,

Interlude

that he took into camp the before-mentioned Dana, who had formerly been a reporter, made of him a close friend and devoted propagandist. As to the campaign proper, Sherman's disbelief in its tactics expressed verbally and in writing could not shake Grant's determination to proceed on his own lines. But the difference of opinion would not have been so advertised unless Sherman himself had done so. Grant's opinion of those whom he believed to have wronged him is not mellowed by the perspective of years and the shadow of death. By the same token I believe he tells the truth in his praise of Sherman. When politicians poured into camp Grant records:

There was a little knot around Sherman and another around me, and I heard Sherman repeating, in the most animated manner, what he had said to me when we first looked down from Walnut Hills upon the land below on the 18th of May, adding: "Grant is entitled to every bit of the credit for the campaign; I opposed it. I wrote him a letter about it." But for this speech it is not likely that Sherman's opposition would have ever been heard of. His untiring energy and great efficiency during the campaign entitled him to a full share of all the credit due for its success.

In the earlier marches the sufferings of the men in enemy terrain at times can easily be imagined; and nowhere is the commander's faith in better times, and victory, more clearly emphasized than here:

I remember that in passing around the left of the line on the 21st, a soldier, recognizing me, said in rather a low voice, but yet so that I heard him, "Hard tack." In a moment the cry was taken up all along the line, "Hard tack. Hard tack." I told the

Grant's Last Stand

men nearest to me that we had been engaged ever since the arrival of the troops in building a road over which to supply them with everything they needed. The cry was instantly changed to cheers.

In the dramatic Battle of the Wilderness, where he was first to come to grips with Lee himself, we shall have further evidence of Grant's ability, by the statement of a simple fact, to turn depression into cheers.

§ 2

Sherman says that throughout the Vicksburg campaign Grant conceived all the major operations, and comprehended their execution to the smallest detail. He was quartermaster, supply officer, cavalryman, commanding officer, as well as inspirer of those far and near. "McLernand," wrote Sherman as an aftermath, "could not let his mind get beyond the limits of his vision, . . . all was brilliant about him . . . and suspicious beyond. . . . I am somewhat blind to what occurs near me, but have a clear perception of things and events remote. Grant possesses the happy medium. . . . I have a much quicker perception of things than he, but he [Grant] balances the present and remote so evenly that results follow in natural course."

§ 3

As a reaction from the terrific strain of Vicksburg, Grant sank into lethargy again, and, possibly, into bad habits. The autobiography can hardly be expected to make mention of the question which is proper to examine

Interlude

at this time as we might examine any other, giving it no more or less importance.

I have in my possession a note in General Grant's handwriting to his physician, Doctor Douglas, in which Grant states during his final illness: "Liquor even as a medicine has been distasteful to me for many years."

Practically all the first-hand evidence which this writer has been able to find as to Grant's drinking is by way of implication; though the implications are fairly strong that at certain times, before he came to a position of importance, whiskey was an occasional release from boredom.

Where there was much smoke there was presumably some fire. But the question is, as in the case of the Belgian atrocities, how much of the flame was fanned by propaganda, how much of the propaganda was forwarded by jealousy, and how much would have been noticed at all in the case of a Jones or a Brown, or remembered in history but for Lincoln's alleged remark: "I should like to find the brand of whiskey which Grant drinks and send it to my other generals."

If Grant himself could have heard of the above remark one wonders if he would have said, as he did of the legend of the famous apple tree near Appomattox, "Like many other stories, it would be very good if it was only true." Perhaps Lincoln did make the remark. I have found no contemporary writer, however, who knew Lincoln, and who vouches for it in print. Let us briefly skim the record:

On the affirmative side there is the opinion, generally stated, that his resignation from the army in 1854 was

Grant's Last Stand

hastened, if not actually caused by the fact that Major Buchanan at Fort Humboldt in the West had requested the resignation and had held it in escrow, to be acted upon, in case Grant had another "relapse." Perhaps the terse statement in the *Memoirs*—"I saw no chance of supporting them (a wife and two children) on the Pacific Coast out of my pay as an army officer. I concluded therefore to resign"—is lacking in necessary amplification.¹

General Rawlins, a God-fearing widower, who before the war had been an Illinois lawyer of note, early became keeper of Grant's conscience. There is evidence that Rawlins stoutly denied to the world that Grant was drinking very hard, while at the same time he stoutly admonished his charge against further misconduct. On December 30, 1861 (that was before the capture of Donelson), Rawlins wrote to Congressman Washburne, who it will be remembered was Grant's sponsor in Congress:

"I will answer your inquiry fully and frankly, but first I would say unequivocally and emphatically that the statement that General Grant is drinking very hard is utterly untrue and could have originated only in malice. When I came to Cairo, General Grant was as he is today, a strictly total abstinence man, and I have been informed by those who knew him well, that such has been his habit for the last five or six years."

¹Louis A. Coolidge, a favoring, but not a contemporary, biographer, writes: "Like many other officers thus circumstanced, he drank more than he should and in his case a little was too much. It did not cloud his judgment or impede his speech, but it impaired his power of locomotion and he was physically helpless while his mind was clear. Those who knew him testify to this so uniformly that it must be true; and while not of supreme importance it cannot be ignored."

Interlude

This contemporary report of his loyal friend Rawlins has the ring of truth. It would indicate that Grant had on occasion, previous to the outbreak of war, when he was bored with the army and perhaps during the year or two after his resignation, taken more than was good for him—but had been an abstainer for the past five or six years. The evidence of relapses from the beginning of the Civil War to the end of his life—that is, most of his adult life—are far between. Those closest to him, like Porter and Wilson, make no mention in their books.

An affirmative implication also is a description of a certain boat trip given by Charles A. Dana, formerly of *The New York Tribune*, in later years the well-remembered dynamo of *The New York Sun*. Dana, to be sure, wrote his reminiscences thirty years after the Civil War; but at the time of which he writes he was in the service of the War Department, acting as Stanton's eyes and ears with the Army. He was fond of Grant. On a very hot June 6, 1863, when Grant had Pemberton bottled up in Vicksburg and there was not much to do except consolidate and wait, Grant decided to inspect operations at Sartartia, up the Yazoo River. He asked Dana to come along. After they got on the boat Dana says that "Grant was ill and went to bed"; that in view of warnings that they were running into dangerous territory he (Dana) decided to turn back toward Haines' Bluff; that Grant was too sick to decide anything, that Grant was quite "himself" the next morning.

Several weeks later, after the fall of Vicksburg, Grant visited and was entertained at New Orleans, where he went on an inspection trip. There are rumors of indul-

Grant's Last Stand

gence at this time. It was here that his horse dashed against a carriage, and the newly appointed major-general of regulars fell from his horse and was rolled upon. The leg and side were painfully squashed. He was in bed for a week and thereafter the leg bothered him more or less for the remainder of his life. "The horse I rode," says Grant, and as usual his account is as valuable as anybody's, "was vicious and but little used, and on my return to New Orleans ran away and, shying at a locomotive in the street, fell, probably on me. I was rendered insensible, and when I regained consciousness I found myself in a hotel near by with several doctors attending me. My leg was swollen from the knee to the thigh, and the swelling, almost to the point of bursting, extended along the body up to the armpit. The pain was almost beyond endurance. I lay at the hotel something over a week without being able to turn myself in bed. I had a steamer stop at the nearest point possible, and was carried to it on a litter. I was then taken to Vicksburg, where I remained unable to move for some time afterwards."

There appears to have been some talk of drinking during the lull between the time he was appointed Staff General and Commander-in-Chief of all the armies and the beginning of the Virginia campaign against Lee. Even if supported by fact, which one doubts, Grant by this time was too great with achievement for it to cause a dent. Throughout his term as Secretary of War, as President and thereafter, there is only rumor, usually attributed to scurrilous opponents.

On the bright side of the shield, there is no indication that the soldier ever let indulgence interfere with im-

Interlude

portant business. Its worst feature was the handle given to his critics, such as Halleck writing to the War Department March 4, 1862, "A rumor has just reached me that since the taking of Fort Donelson Grant has resumed his former bad habits. If so it will account for his repeated neglect of my oft-repeated orders. I do not deem it advisable to arrest him at present, but have placed General Smith in command of the expedition up the Tennessee." It allowed jealous officers like General Prentiss to exclaim with a vestige of truth, "I will not serve under a drunkard!" It allowed a detractor to give as an example of drunkenness an occasion at an army post on the west coast when Grant drove three horses in tandem down the village street (an example of extreme alertness, most people would think).

In William B. Hesseltine's careful but by no means sparing or friendly book, *Ulysses S. Grant; Politician*, I have counted no less than five situations where the author records that at this time his enemies "diligently circulated the *rumor* that Grant was drunk," or words to that effect. But it is always "rumors."

Colonel Robert McCormick becomes quite heated for the defense. "That a jackal should have been allowed to mangle a lion cub is a smudge on the history of the military service," states McCormick, referring to Major Buchanan, who was instrumental in causing Grant to resign from the service. "Such evidence as has come to my attention does not indicate that Grant was a drunkard at any time, or indeed that he drank more than any number of successful men in and out of military life. For purposes of comparison I have looked up the records

Grant's Last Stand

of all the outstanding generals in the war and find only one teetotaler among them, Stonewall Jackson, for J. H. Wilson and Rawlins cannot be ranked so high. Several generals who distinguished themselves drank a great deal; one of the Union's most conspicuous failures never touched a drop of liquor.—The gross appetites and vices by which Napoleon incapacitated himself for generalship are omitted or glossed over by his biographers. That frailties in one period of Grant's life should be dug up and magnified by foreign writers who wish to tarnish his genius at least indicated purpose, but that they should be seriously accepted by American commentators indicates a tragic lack of national self-respect."

Grant had few outside interests other than his family, and had none of the nimble pursuits of small minds. Unless the stakes were high, laziness on one side and ambition on the other seemed to counteract each other with equal strength. The result was inaction, and the lack of interest in trivial things, in theories, or arguments may have led toward the bottle.

There comes to mind a revealing picture given by a visitor to Galena in the dreary days when Ulysses was a nonentity in his brother's leather store. It seems that some of the important men of the town were present arguing excitedly about the Frémont-Buchanan campaign of '56. Grant, silent, shabby and unnoticed, stood behind the counter. Word came that a man had got out of the county jail. With as much commotion as you might pick up a fishing rod, Grant took down his rifle, walked to the man's house, where he expected to find him barricaded, and in twenty minutes had him back in

Interlude

jail. The discussion was resumed and Grant returned, uncommunicative, to the counter. The argument was still in progress.

The best evidence, by way of recapitulation, is that Grant was not a teetotaler and that in his early days he did on occasions take what for him was too much, even though it would not have affected others. He overcame the habit.² It gave his enemies a handle of attack in the use of which they were unscrupulous to a degree. Lincoln probably never made the remark about feeding the same brand of whiskey to his other generals.

The entire question, one imagines, is given too much prominence in the case of a man whose relaxation from the twin nemeses of strain and boredom harmed no one but himself. How many of us, one may repeat, would relish having our most personal faults held before a public magnifying glass? Grant was never quarrelsome, nor mean, nor drunk on duty. One of the modern biographers, who is far from putting Grant on a pedestal, is well-toned in his reference to a man who in his early life needed outlet because he was "devoid of . . . pleasure . . . in the feel and texture of living. His emotions were buried, but not dead; they were buried alive."³

So let us consider Grant with a little lenience, remembering that toward women this shy and inexpressive

²Upon reading this discussion my editor writes to me, "Grant's habit of not turning back was the strongest habit he had, probably much stronger than even the habit of drink could have been. If he had feared that he was ruining himself by drinking, he would have made an effort to swear off and, he of all men who ever lived, would not have turned back. I have never heard this said, but it seems to me to have great strength as an argument."

³W. E. Woodward: *Meet General Grant*.

Grant's Last Stand

being was strictly Puritan; that neither books nor Beethoven nor the art galleries of Europe⁴ satisfied his creative instincts; that in those days we must think of him in terms of action if at all, and that the action now moves forward to stupendous heights, even sharper and more gorgeous than before.

⁴He did, however, take an almost feminine interest in flowers.

CHAPTER XI

A New Letter About Lincoln

§ 1

ON THE desk before me is a memorandum in General Grant's pencilled handwriting addressed to his friend and physician, Doctor Douglas. It reads:

I have been writing up my views of some of our Generals, and of the character of Lincoln & Stanton. I do not place Stanton as high as some people do. Mr. Lincoln cannot be extolled to ~~such~~ highly. — July 2. p.m.

I have been writing up my views of some of our Generals and of the character of Lincoln and Stanton [Lincoln's Secretary of War]. I do not place Stanton as high as some people do. Mr. Lincoln cannot be extolled too highly.

The memorandum was written during the last stage of Grant's illness after he had been removed in a weak-

Grant's Last Stand

ened condition to a cottage at Mt. McGregor in the hills far above the Hudson River, where he died.

Grant first met the Secretary of War some weeks after the victory at Vicksburg and up to that time he had seen the President only once, years earlier, on a day when from the outskirts of the crowd he heard a gawky Illinois lawyer debating against Stephen A. Douglas. Grant's analysis of Lincoln and Stanton is of interest, since we must keep in mind that during a great part of the Civil War many people placed both Seward, the Secretary of State, and Stanton on a higher scale than Lincoln. Lincoln himself pretended to defer to Stanton because it was the only way he could handle the vain but efficient old porpoise, and also because by placing them on Stanton's shoulders he could escape the blame for many of his own policies. On one occasion the spokesman of a delegation to the White House reported to the President that Stanton said "The President is a fool."

"Did Stanton say I was a fool?" inquired Lincoln.

"He used that very word."

"Stanton is usually right," replied the President. "I will slip over and see him."

Returning to the *Memoirs*, Grant had spent the weeks following the capture with his family in the comparative peace of a quiet house on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River at Vicksburg. He watched the widower Rawlins become engaged to a charming New England young lady, then acting as governess to a planter's daughters—an incident which caused both joy and difficulty, since Rawlins swore as naturally as he breathed and the lady was—a lady. Grant also watched Halleck

A New Letter About Lincoln

dissipate the army of Vicksburg under various commands which got themselves into various difficulties culminating with Rosecrans' defeat at Chickamauga, which almost neutralized the momentum of Grant's victories. Without Rawlins to watch him he took a trip to New Orleans, fell from his horse and revived the drinking gossip which sprang up occasionally between campaigns. He watched the Southern commander Bragg take up a comfortable and seemingly impregnable perch on the heights topping Chattanooga, where the army of the Cumberland under Rosecrans was in sore danger of capture. And suddenly, in these dire straits, the War Department called upon Grant to take entire control, creating the "Military Division of the Mississippi," and giving to Grant command of all its departments. To save the army at Chattanooga was his first mission. Secretary of War Stanton came secretly all the way out to Indianapolis ostensibly to confer with, but really to size up, this strange, shabby-looking general, whom he had never seen, about whom there was so much gossip, who seemed to win successes without having the personal earmarks of success, and who handled himself with "no more pomp than if he had been a broken down quartermaster on half pay."

Ignorant of the purpose of his orders received on the morning of October 17, 1863, Grant went by rail via Indianapolis.

"Just as the train I was on was starting out of the depot at Indianapolis a messenger came running up to stop it, saying the Secretary of War was coming into the station and wanted to see me.

Grant's Last Stand

"I had never met Mr. Stanton up to that time, though we had held frequent conversations over the wires the year before, when I was in Tennessee. Occasionally at night he would order the wires between the War Department and my headquarters to be connected, and we would hold a conversation for an hour or two."

Grant neglects to tell us that as Stanton dismissed his private car and boarded the regular train he grasped the hand of Doctor Kittoe, Grant's staff surgeon, and exclaimed: "How are you, General Grant? I knew you at sight from your pictures."

What Stanton lacked in the sensitiveness and simplicity which would draw to him a character like Grant's, he made up in conscientious energy and devotion to the cause.

For a day and a half the black-bearded Secretary of War and the brown-bearded General exhausted necessary subjects of discussion. Stanton gave Grant his choice of two orders, one of which relieved Rosecrans and assigned General Thomas to his place as head of the army then at Chattanooga. The latter Grant accepted. From now until the end of the war Stanton and Grant co-operated to the best of their ability for the good of the service. Both respected, but neither understood the other.

§ 2

Grant ascended to the heights of Vicksburg for his first great victory. He climbed higher at Chattanooga, sometimes called the "Battle above the Clouds," for his next

A New Letter About Lincoln

great fight. He was carried to the top of Mt. McGregor for his last and greatest victory. As he approaches the Chattanooga campaign he is writing more hurriedly and for longer hours at a stretch; at the end of the chapter he has a hemorrhage¹ which almost kills him.

When Grant was called to the rescue of Chattanooga, Rosecrans, having retreated from Chickamauga, lay very nearly surrounded by Bragg's Confederate army in the town of Chattanooga. To complicate matters General Burnside was also bottled up at Knoxville, one hundred miles to the northeast. The situation had been brought about in this manner: Directing operations from Washington, the learned Halleck had advised Rosecrans and Burnside to undertake a concerted movement against the Tennessee River line at both Chattanooga and Knoxville. Rosecrans manœuvred in such a way that the enemy suddenly slipped in between himself and Burnside, whereupon, in a surprise battle, he was defeated and driven back with two corps into Chattanooga. (At this battle of Chickamauga, in which the Army of the Cumberland was driven back, General Thomas remained stubbornly on the field until the next day, gaining for himself the title of "The Rock of Chickamauga.") Upon hearing from Dana that Rosecrans was about to give up Chattanooga, Grant at once relieved Rosecrans of command and promoted General Thomas to the head of the Army of the Cumberland. Simultaneously, however, Grant started for the field of operations himself, and this Thomas seems to have resented.

Meantime Lincoln, Halleck and Stanton besieged

¹Diary of Doctor Douglas.

Grant's Last Stand

Grant with prayers to do something for the relief of Burnside.

Before starting out from Louisville, where he and Stanton had spent two days thrashing out everything on the calendar, Grant reveals his own matter-of-fact approach to war. When Stanton received the dispatch from Dana—that Rosecrans was about to retreat—he became greatly excited, “inquiring of every person he met, including guests of the house, whether they knew where I was, and bidding them find me . . . at once. About eleven o’clock I returned to the hotel [Grant had been to the theatre, to the great distress of Rawlins, who looked upon it as a time for penitence and prayer²] and on my way, when near the house, every person met was a messenger from the Secretary, apparently partaking of his impatience to see me. I hastened to the room of the Secretary and found him pacing the floor rapidly in his dressing gown.”

Grant wrote the necessary orders assuming command of the Military Division of the Mississippi and went to bed, starting next morning for Nashville.

Before reaching the front Grant got a note³ from his friend Sherman which gives us an indication that all was not honey in the circle of officers:

“I am very anxious you should go to Nashville, as foreshadowed by Halleck, and chiefly as you can harmonize all conflicts of feeling that may exist in that vast crowd. Rosecrans and Burnside and Sherman, with their subordinates, would be ashamed of petty quarrels, if you

²Louis A. Coolidge.

³Adam Badeau, *Military History of U. S. Grant*.

A New Letter About Lincoln

were behind and near them, between them and Washington. Next, the union of such armies, and the direction of it, is worthy your ambition. I shall await news from you with great anxiety." Sherman, however, as well as the others, apparently expected Grant to direct operations from Nashville. The slumbering fires are attested by Grant's reception.

Grant does not mention in the *Memoirs* an incident connected with one of his new subordinates, General Hooker, who was at Bridgeport when Grant passed through. Instead of calling on his commanding officer, he sent a carriage to bring Grant to him—"an extraordinary breach of military etiquette," says McCormick, for which "Grant so sternly reprimanded him that thereafter he feared Grant more than the enemy." It is a matter of record, however, that the reproof came from Rawlins, who did not wait to see what his mild-mannered chief would say. Seeing that Hooker's stand was an attempt to gain ascendancy over "The hayseed leader of those hoodlums of the Tennessee"—the thought is General King's—Rawlins's "resonant voice informed (Hooker's) Potomac-schooled aide-de-camp, and a score of staff officers sitting about, that 'General Grant is himself not very well and . . . expects General Hooker, and all other generals who have business with him, to call at once.'" This message, General King further states, opened the eyes of Hooker to the soldier stuff at Grant's headquarters. (One is reminded of office secretaries, in their my-boss-won't-come-to-the-phone-until-your-boss-is-on-maneuvres.)

Next day Grant rode and was carried (the leg still too

Grant's Last Stand

(lame to bear weight) sixty miles farther to Chattanooga, where Wilson, later Grant's chief-of-staff, gives this picture of the meeting with General Thomas:

Grant, wet and weary, reached town between eight and nine o'clock at night, and of course went directly to Thomas' headquarters. I got in from my work a little later and found the two generals seated on the opposite sides of a blazing wood fire, a little puddle of water under Grant's chair and his clothes steaming from the heat. They were both silent and grave. Rawlins, whom I had shaken hands with as I was going in, was white with anger at the cool reception the General and staff had received. They had made a long and tiresome ride and were soaking wet, but as yet nothing had been done to relieve their discomfort. They had found shelter but apparently nothing more. It is a fact worth recording that neither he (Grant) nor Rawlins ever quite forgot the frigidity of their reception.

CHAPTER XII

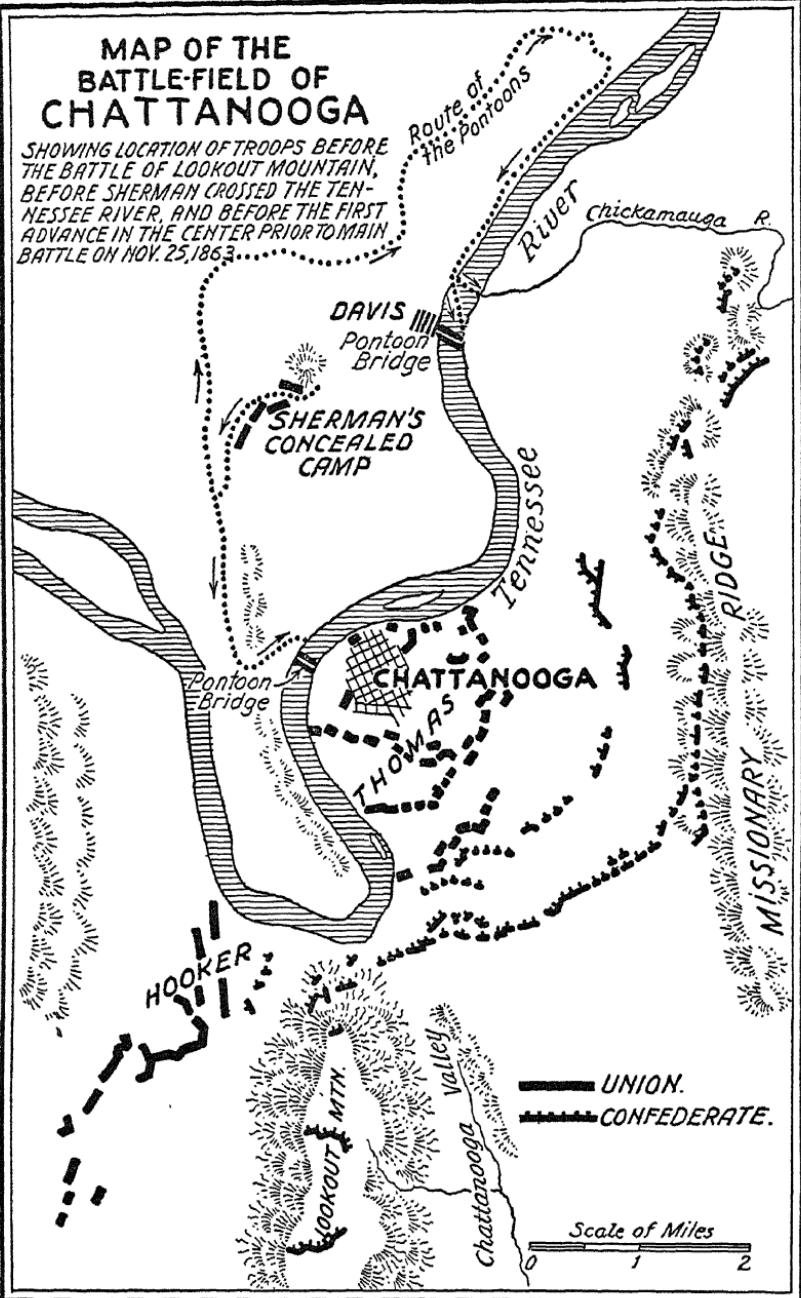
The Heights at Chattanooga

CHATTANOOGA rests its head in the bent arms of the Tennessee River, on its east side, a few miles south of the junction with the smaller Chickamauga River. To the south is Lookout Mountain. This is now in possession of the Confederates, whose batteries command the sloping reaches down to the streams on either side. To the north the head of the Tennessee together with South Chickamauga Creek and marsh-lands envelop the town. The other opening directly to the east is blocked by eight miles or so of Missionary Ridge, along which lies entrenched the major part of Bragg's force. On low rations, and in lower morale, the main army, with lines of supply cut off, rested about the town. Grant's first job is to open the line of supply; and this he finally does. The soldiers called it their "cracker line." With fresh vegetables the weak and languid appearance of the troops quickly vanished.

While Grant was on one of his inspection trips the day after arrival, he and his staff approached the river some three miles below Lookout Mountain, were freely observed and within easy range of the pickets across stream. The pickets watched, but did not fire. "They must have seen that we were all commissioned officers," Grant says, "but, I suppose, they looked upon the garrison of Chatta-

MAP OF THE BATTLE-FIELD OF CHATTANOOGA

SHOWING LOCATION OF TROOPS BEFORE
THE BATTLE OF LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN,
BEFORE SHERMAN CROSSED THE TEN-
NESSEE RIVER, AND BEFORE THE FIRST
ADVANCE IN THE CENTER PRIOR TO MAIN
BATTLE ON NOV. 25, 1863.



Adapted, with author's permission, from Ulysses S. Grant: The Great Soldier of America, by Robert R. McCormick

The Heights at Chattanooga

nooga as prisoners of war, feeding or starving themselves, and thought it would be inhuman to kill any of them. . . .”

At one time when Grant came along the Union picket guard sent up the familiar “turn out the guard for the commanding general.” Across the creek the “Confederate picket post in like manner called out ‘Turn out the guard for the commanding general,’ and, I believe, added, ‘General Grant.’ Their line in a moment front-faced to the north, facing me, and gave a salute, which I returned.” Later and even more informal is the picture Grant gives of his talking to a soldier in the Confederate colors who was seated on a log near the creek. He was very polite, touching his cap to General Grant, and in answer to a question—which Grant asked by way of conversation, “but not with a view of gaining any particular information”—stated that he belonged to General Longstreet’s corps. Imagine a French picket guard at Verdun passing the time of day with Hindenburg! But the weirdest touch of all is the picture of General “Little Phil” Sheridan stopping in the middle of the charge against the carnaged rifle pits on Missionary Ridge, brandishing his flask and drinking a toast to the fleeing rebels, who stop in their course and give him a lusty salvo—not of rifle shots, but of cheers!

Having opened a line of food supply, Grant developed the plan to fight his way out. It was technically known as the “double envelopment” and depended on the timing of several co-ordinate factors. Hooker was ordered to bring his forces between the bend of the Tennessee River and Lookout Mountain, to drive the enemy from their stronghold, and, having done that to envelop the

Grant's Last Stand

southern end of Missionary Ridge. Sherman was to march north on the west side of the river, remain concealed behind the mountains as long as possible and cross the stream by pontoon bridge just south of the point at which the Chickamauga entered the Tennessee. Sherman was then to attack Missionary Ridge from the north. When the two wings were pinched, General Thomas in the center (under whom were the divisions of Baird, Wood, Sheridan and Johnson) was to charge up the west front of Missionary Ridge.

Sherman had been making forced marches for ten days to reach his position in the neighborhood of Chattanooga and Grant mentions that perhaps his further march northward had misled General Bragg. At all events Grant believes his opponent made grave mistakes first, in sending 20,000 troops under his allied corps commander (Longstreet) who was dispatched toward Burnside at Knoxville; and later "in sending away a [another] division of troops on the eve of battle."

On account of the dangerous position of Burnside, bottled up in Knoxville, it was of paramount importance to commence immediate operations against Bragg; but the attack could not commence until Sherman's arrival. A messenger had been sent urging Sherman to hasten. The messenger paddled down the Tennessee in a canoe, floated over Muscle Shoals and at Iuka reached Sherman, who gave up the work he was engaged upon and pushed north at once. On November 4, Bragg dispatched Longstreet's corps off to fight Burnside at Knoxville; therefore Grant at once directed Thomas to attack the enemy's right in the hope of forcing the return of troops which

The Heights at Chattanooga

had been sent up the valley. But Thomas found reasons, probably sound, why the attack could not be made. The situation then became a race to see whether Grant could attack Bragg at Chattanooga before Longstreet could attack the imperilled Burnside at Knoxville. Grant, or rather Sherman, won the race. Sherman personally reached Chattanooga November 15, checked plans with Grant, looked over the terrain where his own assignment lay on the 16th, and that same night started down the river to rejoin and speed up his command, rowing a boat himself from Kelly's Ferry.¹ Grant puts it mildly when he records, "I, as well as the authorities in Washington, was still in a great state of anxiety for Burnside's safety."

Before the troops were in position to fight, 102 miles of railroad had to be built or rebuilt, 182 bridges constructed, and "every branch of railroad building, making tools to work with, and supplying workmen with food, was all going on at once, and without the aid of a mechanic or laborer except what the command itself furnished."

The engineering, transport, and supply problems for all these troops was gigantic. Grant's long training as quartermaster, his Vicksburg experience in engineering and river transportation, his exact knowledge of the unit needs of officers, men and horses for each and every contingency, his mathematical ability to see each factor in its proper proportion, and above all his calm faith that the outcome would fit the picture he had imagined—all

¹Sherman's memoirs state that he "took a hand" at the oars. One of the rare instances of misinformation by Grant.

Grant's Last Stand

these elements were fused in the successful battle of Chattanooga.

Cold rain fell in torrents November 20 and 21, delaying the bridge building and Sherman's advance. During the night of the 21st, 116 pontoon boats were placed in North Chickamauga and the material for the roadway over these was then concealed near by. A deserter informed Grant that Bragg was leaving the front, but a check-up showed that Buckner's (unconditional surrender) division had been sent up north to aid Longstreet. Grant decided to strike on November 23, a day ahead of schedule, and a day before Sherman's command was in position across the river on the northern wing.

The Union now had in its possession Fort Wood, most of whose twenty-two pieces could reach the enemy line below Missionary Ridge. Clouds lifting at 2 P.M. revealed to the enemy all of Thomas's corps, containing divisions of Johnson, Sheridan, Wood and Baird, drawn up as if for parade. Signal for advance was given by the booming of cannon from Fort Wood. Union lines sweep forward and up; within two hours have carried the minor heights without halting to reform lines, "not without loss" their leader understates, for 2200 men are dead or wounded on both sides. During the night the new positions are fortified.

On the 24th there was nothing for Thomas to do beyond consolidating the points gained the previous day; but engineer General Giles A. Smith still had the huge assignment of getting Sherman's armies across the swollen river so as to be in position to attack the top end of Missionary Ridge. By daylight most of the troops were

The Heights at Chattanooga

across, and by one o'clock P.M., preceded by a skirmish line, Sherman advanced without great loss, gaining the heights and dragging artillery up by hand. Dense drifting clouds obscured the enemy's view until, dispersed by wind and a breath of sunshine, thousands of human figures and their wire-haired, tousle-headed commander could be seen above the clouds by those who had glasses. The enemy now began a violent cannonade. On the right flank Hooker's movements, also covered by a shroud of fog, enabled him to sweep the enemy from Lookout Mountain in the famous "Battle Above the Clouds." Coming down to the valley beyond in order to take up his position on the morrow on the right end of the Union line, he was delayed at least four hours by bridges which the Confederates had burned. He had to ford the creeks.

At twelve o'clock at night when all was quiet Grant relates, "I began to give orders for the next day. . . . Sherman was directed to attack at daylight. Hooker (on the right) was ordered to move at the same hour, and . . . intercept the enemy's retreat if he still remained. . . . Thomas (at the center, who was to charge up the front of Missionary Ridge) was not to move until Hooker had (also) reached Missionary Ridge."

The day dawned clear and bright. Grant and Thomas stood at the crest of Orchard Knob from where with field glasses they could see as well as pull the strings to manipulate the moving masses. Even Bragg's headquarters were in full view. Staff officers could be seen coming and going.

When Sherman's march-worn troops had reached a point where they threatened the Confederate command-

Grant's Last Stand

er's flank, as well as his stores and ammunition lines, Bragg detached reinforcements to contest Sherman's further advance, particularly through a railroad tunnel connecting two high spurs of land. Grant could clearly see column after column of Bragg's forces moving against Sherman. Grant directed Thomas to send a division to reinforce Sherman. Sherman held fast. But Hooker was delayed those precious four hours by the destruction of bridges across Chattanooga Creek beyond Lookout Mountain. At 3:30 in the afternoon it looked like a repulse. Sherman's position was so perilous that in the early afternoon of November 25, Grant ordered Thomas to commence the assault upon the center. For some reason, Grant maintains, Thomas delayed so long that he (Grant) finally gave the order himself to division commander Thomas J. Wood who stood near by. In an incredibly short time loud cheering was heard, and Wood and Sheridan were charging forward, driving the enemy from the lower line of rifle pits on Missionary Ridge, so furiously and rapidly that rebel and Union troops were over the first line of works almost together. This was the famous charge where the pressure on the Confederate center with both wings engaged—how successfully they did not know—was so tremendous that the ranks broke and they fled in terror. Here was where Wood and Sheridan charged up the hill, the latter with his renowned brandy flask in hand. The troops were supposed to stop and reorganize at the first rifle pits. But there was no holding them back.

"Who ordered the charge to continue?" Grant sternly demanded of Thomas; and upon the latter's hesitant

The Heights at Chattanooga

reply, admonished, "Very well, if it succeeds, but if not, sir, you will hear from me." It did succeed beyond all promise. McCormick, quoting from Polybius, likens the Confederate situation to that of the Romans at Cannae:

Everywhere, in front, to the right, to the left, in the rear, the Roman soldiers heard the furious clamor of combat. The physical pressure was unimportant. The moral pressure was enormous. Uneasiness, then terror, took hold of them. . . .

There is a similarity in the crisis confronting Grant at three o'clock on November 24, 1862, and the one facing Napoleon at seven o'clock on June 15, 1815. Each had attacked his enemy and had failed to beat him. At Chattanooga Grant put in his last man and won a war; at Waterloo Napoleon held out a fraction of his reserve and lost—the world.

Perhaps one could state it more simply in saying that by skilful and resolute procedure Grant was able to put his basic plan into operation. First to concentrate against the enemy a greater number of troops than they possessed. Second to hold and extend both flanks, and thirdly to assault the center with every available man. The plan was simple. The tremendous detail of its execution, in the face of mountains, rivers and rain, required the adamant ability possessed at that moment by no other military leader on the American continent.

The armies of the Tennessee and the Cumberland pursued Bragg for two days. Grant might have pushed on into Georgia and hastened the end of the war; but he was constrained to go to the relief of Burnside. Thus for the third time his plans for immediate capitalization of victories were held in check.

CHAPTER XIII

The Warrior at Death's Door

§ 1

IN HIS diary—a ponderous affair from which brown flakes peel off like crumbling leaves in autumn—Doctor Douglas describes minutely the events of April 2, 1885, when, after he finished writing the account of the Battle of Chattanooga, General Grant nearly died. The General had now broken the back of his book, for he had set down, as accurately as he was able, the less known and more disputed phases of his early life and early war career. The latter aspects, following his appointment as Commander-in-Chief, were reasonably well known to the public. At the bottom of the page on which the chapter on Chattanooga ends there is a slim footnote, perhaps inserted by his publisher, Mark Twain,¹ which states:

From this point on this volume was written (with the exception of the campaign in the Wilderness, which had been previously written) by General Grant after his great illness in April, and the present arrangement of the subject matter was made by him between the 10th and the 18th of July, 1885.

After his summer at Deal Beach, New Jersey, the

¹A later chapter will show how the book was taken from the Century Company, by Mark Twain.

The Warrior at Death's Door

General had come back to the brick house in 66th Street, where during the winter he had hacked away at the *Memoirs*.

During January and February his condition had been so unsatisfactory that Doctor Markoe and Doctor Sands were called into consultation, in addition to Doctors Shrady and Barker, and there was read to them the report of the microscopical examination of tissue which had been removed from the edge of the ulceration. Doctor Douglas believed that the sudden turn for the worse was brought about by the consistent strain of writing; for Douglas often refers to the "cerebral exaltation" noticeable when he was in the throes of composition; and that he lay awake much of the night planning for the next day's work. On top of this came a public rebuff which cut deeply—how deeply only those medical men could know who judged from physical results. The preceding winter the Senate passed a bill to restore Grant his rank and place him on the retired list of the Army. For party reasons the bill was defeated in the House on February 16, the anniversary of Fort Donelson. (At a later time, though too late to benefit the patient, it was passed.)

From Doctor Douglas's diary, January 28, 1885:

"The General had, at this time, more neuralgia in the head; interfering with his work upon his *Memoirs*, which up to this date had occupied him quite assiduously. He had to intermit his labors more frequently, and this added to his trouble, for he was very anxious to complete his work, upon which he was constantly engaged."

Grant's Last Stand

February 18, 1885: "Made a local application of cocaine to the throat to diminish as much as possible the pain of digital examination. When this was done we all met in the General's room, the one occupied by him in writing,—into which a flood of sunlight was pouring —and a close and searching examination was made, both by direct light, and by the concentrated light from a frontal mirror, and finally by the finger. Returning to the parlour, each gentleman gave his separate individual opinion confirming the diagnosis. Both Doctor Markoe and Doctor Sands agreed that surgical interference was impracticable."

February 2: "Suffered much last night. Great pain in right ear. Did not sleep until six in the morning, then at intervals until noon."

March 4 Doctor Barker writes a memorandum to Doctor Shrady which states in part, "I do not believe that Doctor Douglas ever used the word 'cancer' in connection with the case. We have always spoken of it as Epithelioma, of a malignant type probably. It was greatly improved for a time by the local treatment of Doctor Douglas, and the local condition was manifestly improving, until the moral shock (failure of the bill to pass Congress) broke down his general system."

March 12: "The General did some work on his book in the morning, and in the afternoon at the visit made by Doctor Shrady and myself we found him cheerful and talkative."

March 17: "Bad night. A report that the General had died during the night. In the morning both Doctor

The Warrior at Death's Door

Barker and myself were visited by reporters to ascertain the correctness of report. Neither knew anything concerning it."

March 23: "Restless night. Wrote some manuscript in the morning."

March 28: "Not as well. Consider that the restlessness and appearance of failure is due to the fatigue after the examination in the Fish trial."²

March 29: "When I returned from my night visit, I had not noticed anything particularly alarming, but I had hardly reached my room, when I was aroused by a message from Colonel Grant, stating that his father wished me to come to him at once. We found the General much agitated from an accumulation of mucus in the throat. . . . The throat was immediately relieved of the accumulation of mucus, and soon after (the apprehension of dreaded suffocation having subsided) the General fell into a quiet slumber, which lasted several hours."

April 1; midnight: "After partaking of nourishment (following a severe coughing spell and pain due to accumulated secretions) the General appeared to be sleeping, but the almost imperceptible movement of the respiration, and the feebleness of the heart's action . . . made me so solicitous that . . . about 4 A.M. I aroused Doctor Shady who was sleeping in the adjoining room."

The crisis had arrived which Douglas had feared and for which he had prepared by having at hand a syringe filled with the purest brandy. The family was sum-

²Fish's trial followed upon the failure of the firm of Grant and Ward.

Grant's Last Stand

moned to the bedside and for the first time Mrs. Grant, who had hitherto refused to face the facts, appeared to give up hope.

"Doctor," I said, "the syringe filled with brandy is upon the desk back of you." He turned, took it up and offered it to me. I said, "Use it, Doctor, if it is just as convenient to you." He did so, injecting the brandy into the right arm, both of us continuing to watch the faltering pulse."

As the pulse did not respond satisfactorily a second injection was resorted to, and at once the heart regained its action. "Throughout this time," the Doctor continues, "the General was conscious, spoke clearly when addressed and was the least perturbed of those present."

With the permission of the family a Reverend Doctor Newman was permitted to come to the sick room for the purpose of baptizing the supposed dying man. "The scene was solemn and impressive but as quiet and free from excitement as it possibly could be. From the silver bowl, which the clergyman held, he took the water and gently applied it to the General's brow, and reverently said, 'I baptize thee Ulysses Simpson Grant, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' following these solemn words with a brief and appropriate prayer. Immediately, the General slowly raised his eyes, and looking about him said, 'I thank you. I had intended to have attended to this myself.' "

One is forced to set down a rather macabre aftermath, in that the Reverend Doctor Newman explained to the reporters that prayer had saved the General's life.

"It was the brandy," said Doctor Shrady.

Might be lost in the flurry and excitement of the moment. Dr. Brady after examining the pulse agreed that the time had come for its use. He was at the General's right hand, close by the writing desk upon which the loaded syringes laid.

"Doctor," I said, "the syringe filled with brandy is upon the desk back of you." He turned, took it up and offered it to me. "I said," Use it Doctor, it is just as convenient to you. He did so injecting the brandy into the right arm, both of us continuing to watch the faltering pulse.

Nothing further was said, nor was there the slightest hesitancy or doubt as to the use of the brandy. The syringe had been prepared beforehand by me to be used in case of need. The emergency arose and it was used as intended.

After watching for a little time I perceived the fluttering pulse die

Grant's Last Stand

One feels, however, that Doctor Douglas not only was a psychologist ahead of his day but had come to a rare understanding of his distinguished patient when he writes in the time-worn diary, "I fear the worst the day when General Grant tells me his book is finished."

Perhaps God heard Lincoln say, "I cannot spare this man. He fights."

At all events, within another fortnight Grant was able again to hammer on the *Memoirs*, beginning with the aftermath of glorious Chattanooga.

§ 2

We return to the battle about which Grant was writing.

Whatever may have been the enmities and cross-currents within the armies under Grant's command before and at Chattanooga, the people of the North as a whole now decided that Grant was the man who could galvanize their resources into victory. Other Northern commanders had won battles but had not followed them up. Meade had beaten Lee at Gettysburg, but had allowed him to slip across the James River unmolested. No other Union commander had won four undisputed campaigns and after each had strained at the leash until he had to be restrained by those higher up. The argument that Grant was blessed with luck, that he had more troops than the enemy, that his ideas were furnished by his subordinates—ideas epitomized by such alleged sayings as, "open Grant's head and Rawlins's brains come tumbling out"—were all very well but did not alter the fact that where Grant went, action, and up to this time successful action, followed.

The Warrior at Death's Door

Within three weeks of the relief of Chattanooga a bill was introduced into Congress creating the rank of Lieutenant-General, no names mentioned, but generally understood as designed for the purpose of making Grant General-in-Chief of the armies of the United States.

Three historic letters, none of which are mentioned by Grant in the *Memoirs*, should be introduced at this point. The first is from Grant to his Congressional backer, Elihu Washburne of Illinois.

I feel under many obligations to you for the interest you have taken in my welfare. But recollect that I have been highly honored already by the Government, and do not ask or feel that I deserve anything more in the shape of honors or promotion. A success over the enemy is what I crave above anything else, and desire to hold such an influence over those under my command as to enable me to use them to the best advantage to secure this end.

This was a period of stock taking, and after Grant's commission was a certainty, a period of congratulation amongst the Grant men. No story of the period is complete without including the letters which passed between Sherman and Grant.

Grant to Sherman:

Whilst I have been eminently successful in this war, in at least gaining the confidence of the public, no one feels more than I how much of this success is due to the energy, skill, and the harmonious putting forth of that energy and skill, of those whom it has been my good fortune to have occupying subordinate positions under me. There are many officers to whom these remarks are applicable to a greater or less degree, proportionate

Grant's Last Stand

to their ability as soldiers; but what I want is to express my thanks to you and McPherson as the men to whom, above all others, I feel indebted for whatever I have had of success. How far your advice and assistance have been of help to me, you know; how far your execution of whatever has been given to you to do entitles you to the reward I am receiving, you cannot know as well as I.

To which Sherman replied:

You do McPherson and myself too much honor. At Belmont you manifested your traits, neither of us being near. At Donelson, also, you illustrated your whole character. I was not near, and McPherson in too subordinate a capacity to influence you. . . . I believe you are as brave, patriotic, and just as the great prototype, Washington; as unselfish, kind-hearted, and honest as a man should be; but the chief characteristic is the simple faith in success you have always manifested, which I can liken to nothing else than the faith the Christian has in the Saviour. This faith gave you victory at Shiloh and Vicksburg. Also, when you have completed your best preparations, you go into battle without hesitation, as at Chattanooga—no doubts, no reserve—and I tell you, it was this that made us act with confidence. I knew wherever I was, that you thought of me; and if I got into a tight place you would come—if alive. My only points of doubt were in your knowledge of grand strategy, and of books of science and history; but I confess your common sense seems to have supplied all these.

It has often been stated that Lincoln was behind Grant from the start, had divined that he was the only man for the supreme command, and had suggested the lieutenant-generalcy. The evidence does not bear out this supposition. Lincoln wanted victories which should stop the clamor against his unsuccessful conduct of the war, but

The Warrior at Death's Door

at this time when his own stock was low in a campaign year, he did not relish a political rival. Grant's conduct and aims soon dispelled Lincoln's doubts.

Grant had moved his headquarters back to Nashville, where he could feel the pulse of the entire Department of the Mississippi. Even after being notified of his forthcoming appointment as field generalissimo he had no intention of moving himself from the Western Department. In the West he knew the exact qualities of each general under his command and he felt instinctively the resentment which would be caused by a newcomer put above the Army of the Potomac. It did not require Sherman's warning to stimulate his dislike of the political atmosphere surrounding the eastern armies. But if Grant found it necessary to face a situation he inevitably did so, mastering its new features as he went along, and seldom making the same mistake more than once.

Early in March Grant received orders to report at Washington to receive his commission.

We may pause at this time to take a look at the man upon whom all eyes were focused as the coming savior of the North. Grant was forty-two years of age, about five feet eight inches in height, but weighed only about 140 pounds. General Horace Porter, who has given us other good pictures, speaks of his "modesty of mien and gentleness of manner," his face "not perfectly symmetrical, the left eye being a very little lower than the right. His brow was high, broad, and rather square . . . creased with several horizontal wrinkles, which helped to emphasize the serious and somewhat careworn look, . . . though in no wise an indication of his nature,

Grant's Last Stand

which was always buoyant. . . . His voice was exceedingly musical, and one of the clearest in sound and most distinct in utterance that I have ever heard. It had a singular power of penetration, and sentences spoken by him in an ordinary tone in camp could be heard at a distance which was surprising. His gait in walking might have been called decidedly unmilitary. He never carried his body erect, . . . never kept step to the airs played by the bands. . . . Was often slow in his movements, but when roused to activity he was quick in every motion and worked with marvellous rapidity."

Grant arrived at the nation's capital in typical fashion. Whereas dramatic George McClellan, idol of his well-drilled army and also idol of many a tea-room, used to descend upon the Hotel Willard in great flurry, his path so to speak strewn with flowers, the new commander of all the armies registered so modestly at the same hotel that the clerk assigned him to a small top-floor bedroom. Later the clerk was amazed to read the signature, "U. S. Grant and Son—Illinois."

Richard Henry Dana of Boston (who was to know more about being before the mast than behind the cannon, and who is not to be confused with the Charles A. Dana who accompanied Grant as representative of Secretary of War) happened on Grant in the hotel lobby and was astonished to find him standing around so casually. Dana writes:

A short, round-shouldered man, in a very tarnished major-general's uniform come up. . . . There was nothing marked in his appearance. He had no gait, no station, no manner, rough, light-brown whiskers, a blue eye, and rather a scrubby look

The Warrior at Death's Door

withal. A crowd formed round him; men looked, stared at him, as if they were taking his likeness, and two generals were introduced. Still, I could not get his name. It was not Hooker. Who could it be? I inquired of the bookkeeper. "That is General Grant." I joined the starers. I saw that the ordinary, scrubby-looking man, with a slightly seedy look, as if he was out of office and on half pay, and nothing to do but hang around the entry of Willard's, cigar in mouth, had a clear blue eye, and a look of resolution, as if he could not be trifled with, and an entire indifference to the crowd about him. Straight nose, too. Still to see him talking and smoking in the lower entry of Willard's, in that crowd, in such times—the generalissimo of our armies, on whom the destiny of the empire seemed to hang.

The next morning Dana, having met Grant at breakfast, thus completes his account: "He was just leaving the table, and going to the front for the great movement. I said, 'I suppose, General, you don't mean to breakfast again until the war is over.' 'Not here, I shan't.' He gets over the ground queerly. He does not march, nor quite walk, but pitches along as if the next step would bring him on his nose."

The next day, March 9, at the White House occurred the memorable notification ceremonies. Considerate of Grant's aversion to speechmaking, Lincoln had sent to him a copy of the short speech which he proposed to make, in which occurred the final words "with this high honor, devolves upon you, also, a corresponding responsibility. As the country herein trusts you, so, under God, it will sustain you." Whereupon Grant took from his pocket a half sheet of paper and in "low, but audible" tones read the following reply:

"Mr. President, I accept the commission, with grati-

Grant's Last Stand

tude for the high honor conferred. With the aid of the noble armies that have fought on many a field for our common country, it will be my earnest endeavor not to disappoint your expectations. I feel the full weight of the responsibilities now devolving on me; and I know that if they are met, it will be due to those armies, and above all, to the favor of that Providence which leads both nations and men.”

One bystander observes that half way through his speech Grant’s voice trailed out for lack of breath. He stopped, advanced his left foot, inhaled deeply and finished in loud, clear tones. The ceremonies done, Mrs. Lincoln insisted on Mr. and Mrs. Grant’s dining at the White House; there were many would-be callers, and would-be newspaper feature writers, but Grant vanished as quietly as he had come, and the very next day found him in the field conferring with General Meade at the headquarters of the expectant, but still to be convinced Army of the Potomac. Not without Lincoln’s knowledge, of course, who must have smiled when Grant said, “Really, Mr. President, I have had enough of this show business.”

§ 4

“It is men who wait to be selected, and not those who seek,” wrote Grant, “from whom we may always expect the most efficient service.”

He was speaking in reference to General Meade, the superseded commander of Northern armies in the East, who said to Grant that he (Grant) might want an officer who had served with him in the West to take his

The Warrior at Death's Door

(Meade's) place, and if so to feel no hesitancy in making the change. It must have been a gratifying reception to Grant after his previous experiences. "He [Meade] urged that the work before us was of such vast importance to the whole nation that the feelings or wishes of no one person should stand in the way. . . ."

Grant kept Meade where he was, and determined upon the tactful expedient of pitching his own headquarters close by Meade and sending orders for the Army of the Potomac through Meade as far as possible. Nevertheless, the situation later became embarrassing to both. Sherman was promoted to the head of the Department of the Mississippi, Grant's former position. Major-General Phil Sheridan was brought East in command of the Cavalry Corps and made his everlasting reputation. Grant startled the authorities by requesting General George B. McClellan's reinstatement—but Halleck and Stanton objected so strenuously that the matter was eventually dropped. Halleck, himself, although Chief-of-Staff in Washington, and in nominal tactical command, was not much more than a clearing house of information. Grant continued his policy of keeping particular plans to himself and, acting on Stanton's tip, did not even reveal them to the President. Stanton himself intimated that Mr. Lincoln was so kindhearted he might divulge them. In the *Memoirs* Grant records one suggested scheme of the President's: "He brought out a map of Virginia on which he had evidently marked every position occupied by the Federal and Confederate armies up to that time. He pointed out on the map two streams which empty into the Potomac, and suggested that the army

Grant's Last Stand

might be moved on boats and landed between the mouths of these streams. We would then have the Potomac to bring our supplies, and the tributaries would protect our flanks while we moved out.

"I listened respectfully," Grant adds, "but did not suggest that the same streams would protect Lee's flanks while he was shutting us up. . . . I did not communicate my plans to the President, nor did I to the Secretary of War or to General Halleck."

On matters of broad military policy Grant did indeed co-operate with the administration. He was warned to avoid dashing tactics which might court large disaster, both for the sake of the forthcoming political elections, and for the sake of foreign influence; since British intervention on behalf of the South was not yet out of the question.

We now enter the second phase of conflict, with Halleck practically shelved as Chairman of the Board, and Grant as active president of the Union's company of marching men.

CHAPTER XIV

The Battle of the Wilderness¹

§ 1

GRANT'S strong, clear mind resolved in comparatively simple terms the gigantic task which faced him to bring the war to an end—for rebellion still rode high in the saddle when he took all the reins:

“The resources of the enemy, and his numerical strength, were far inferior to ours; but, as an offset to this, we had a vast territory, with a population hostile to the Government, to garrison, and long lines of river and railroad communications to protect, to enable us to supply the operating armies.

“The armies in the East and West acted independently, and without concert, like a balky team—no two ever pulling together—enabling the enemy to use to great advantage his interior lines of communication for transporting troops from East to West, reinforcing the armies most vigorously pressed.”

This statement not only clarifies the situation, but should have done much to end interminable arguments as to which was the greater soldier, Grant or Lee, an ungracious controversy at best, since each was adapted to

¹In this chapter while condensing and simplifying many versions the author follows mainly the treatment of Robert R. McCormick in *Ulysses S. Grant, the Great Soldier of America*.

Grant's Last Stand

the peculiar task confronting him and neither could by any stretch of the imagination have succeeded in the other's saddle.

Grant's major problem therefore was to set in simultaneous motion, and keep in motion, all the Northern forces, including those of the West under Sherman. His immediate problem was to crush Lee, regardless of geographic points such as Richmond. For Lee's headquarters *was* the Confederacy. The death of one meant the death of the other.

Sherman, now at Chattanooga, was assisted by Thomas, Howard, Hooker and Schofield. Sherman's detail, according to Grant's order, was to "move against Johnston's army, to break it up and to get into the interior of the enemy's country as far as you can, inflicting all the damage you can against their war resources." In connection with war resources Grant gives a droll incident. He says that the Union troops had been instructed to confiscate all Southern bloodhounds, and that an irate Southern lady berated a Yankee private for running off with her pet poodle.

"But this is not a bloodhound," cried the distracted lady.

"Well, madam," answered the private, "we cannot tell what it will grow into."

General Butler commanded the Army of the James, which Grant looked upon as the left wing of the Army of the Potomac. Butler, Grant ordered to attack the Southern capital and cut Lee from his base of supplies. In the center was Grant and ahead of him Lee and the Wilderness.

The Battle of the Wilderness

§ 2

To many, then, who have followed Grant's ascending fortunes, each step punctuated by a situation which had to be surmounted, it has always seemed that the most dramatic scene of all was the first clinch with Lee in the Battle of the Wilderness. Not perhaps dramatic as a battle, with its superficial stalemate, but dramatic in the clash of hitherto unopposed personalities. Both men ended on the ground, but Grant got up and marched forward by the left flank. At dawn of the third day, after forty-eight hours of greater carnage than the continent had yet known, when Grant and his staff picked their way silently along a road leading in the general direction of Richmond, exhausted or wounded men recognized the objective of their leader and gave "the wildest cheers."

To achieve the confidence of the new army, as well as its leaders, was one of Grant's initial difficulties. These leaders may have admitted their inferiority to Lee, but as McCormick says, they were unwilling to admit their inferiority to Grant. From Culpeper, Rawlins wrote testily to his young wife:

There is a habit contracted among officers of this army anything but praiseworthy, namely, of saying of western successes: "Well, you never met Bobby Lee and his boys; it would be quite different if you had." And in speaking of the probabilities of our success in the coming campaign: "Well, that may be, but, mind you, Bobby Lee is just over the Rapidan."

Many personalities in the new organization were to be

Grant's Last Stand

considered. First was Meade, who, in spite of extending the palm to Grant, expressed his inner feelings in a letter to his wife. "You may look now for the Army of the Potomac putting laurels on the brow of another." Meade was a finely grained, sensitive man, who shrank from lone responsibility and was undoubtedly deserving of the kindly couched but none the less searching rebuke which Lincoln wrote him ending in, "Again, my dear General, I do not believe you appreciate the magnitude of the misfortune involved in Lee's escape. He was within your easy grasp, and to have closed upon him would, in connection with our other late successes, have ended the war. As it is, the war will be prolonged indefinitely. If you could not safely attack Lee last Monday, how could you possibly do so south of the river, when you can take with you very few more than two-thirds of the force you then had in hand? It would be unreasonable to expect, and I do not expect [that] you can now effect much. Your golden opportunity is gone, and I am distressed immeasurably because of it."² While willing to carry out orders from others as zealously as if they had been his own, Meade's nervous temperament in the midst of action carried with it a violent temper approaching to madness.

On the staff with Grant were Rawlins, now chastened as to language in the new and more formal atmosphere and no longer, among these men of brains, quite the kingpin of former days. James H. Wilson, whom we remember at Chattanooga, and who is to give us a never-

²After relieving his feelings in this manner Lincoln decided not to send the letter. It was published years later when found among Lincoln's papers.

The Battle of the Wilderness

to-be-forgotten picture of his chief during the two days' battle, was put in charge of the third division under Sheridan; and Horace Porter, another admirer, newly added to the inner circle. Phil Sheridan, as stated, commanded the cavalry corps. The four infantry corps were commanded respectively by Generals W. S. Hancock, G. K. Warren, John Sedgwick, and A. E. Burnside, with Brigadier-General Henry J. Hunt commanding the artillery. General Thomas, the "Rock of Chickamauga," whose feelings toward Grant had not been softened by the victory at Chattanooga, had been detached to conduct the Nashville campaign with his own command. Pitted against them was Robert Lee, the unbeaten, assisted by such stalwarts as Longstreet, Hill, Ewell, Gordon, Early, and Major-General Pickett of Gettysburg renown. Major-Generals Fitzhugh Lee and W. F. Lee are names which stand out in the ranks of Confederate cavalry.

§ 3

At midnight on May 3, 1864, Grant flashed the word which was to set all armies in motion: Meade against Lee; Butler to move against Richmond; Sigel to move on the Shenandoah Valley, Sherman to move against Johnston. Grant's orders, it will be remembered, were to filter through Meade and thus lose much of their speed and pungency.

On the next day, when the battle was really joined, Grant was for the first time not quite himself, for it was observed that his coat was formally buttoned up and

Grant's Last Stand

that he wore a sword and brown cotton gloves! By noon the sword was cast off, the buttons were undone, and well-worn field gloves came into play.³ Before long he came down to the old blue blouse with nothing but shoulder straps to indicate the rank, and field glasses, which he seldom used, strung over the shoulders. "Glasses were never of much use to me in the field. Always carried them," says one of the notes to Doctor Douglas. For

"P"

Glasses were never of
much use to me in the
field. Always carried
them.

ensuing operations the *Memoirs* are a conscientious recital of facts, and numbers, movements, and dispositions, attacks and counter attacks subordinate to a single greater aim: but we must view them in the light of Grant himself. This light he persistently shades. We must look to Wilson and Bowers and Porter.

The first day's movement, a march of twenty miles, the crossing of a river on five bridges by the army en route, and the transfer of the army and fighting trains,

³General Charles King: *The True General Grant*. Horace Porter, however, says by the third day Grant resumed his tarnished buckskin gloves. It was generally supposed that Mrs. Grant had given him the cotton gloves in honor of his Eastern début.

The Battle of the Wilderness

was an engineering success of first magnitude. General Wilson got to his designated station on time. Sedgwick, on Grant's right, held Ewell at bay throughout the day, but carelessly allowed himself to be outflanked at nightfall. But Burnside reached his allotted position two hours late—it is said he took time off to eat a hearty lunch from a champagne-basket—and Hancock, who had tremendous forces at his command and whose initial attack was easily successful, let himself be hammered back, step by step, until nightfall found him entrenched where he had started. Grant remained near Wilderness Tavern in the center where his confidence could be communicated to the greatest number. Once when Grant was sitting with Meade beneath a tree, an aide came trembling with the news that Birney's line, ahead of Hancock's on the left, had been broken. Without moving, the Commander-in-Chief answered in his low, vibrant voice, "I don't believe it."

Horace Porter gives us the famous anecdote of Grant's anger when Sedgwick was outflanked and an excited general dashed to headquarters with the statement, "'This is a crisis. . . . I know Lee's methods well by past experience; he will throw his whole army between us and the Rapidan, and cut us off completely from our communications.' Grant took the cigar from his lips and replied with a degree of animation which he seldom manifested:

"'Oh, I am heartily tired of hearing about what Lee is going to do. Some of you always seem to think he is suddenly going to turn a double somersault, and land in our rear and on both flanks at the same time. Go back to

Grant's Last Stand

your command, and try to think what *we* are going to do ourselves, instead of what Lee is going to do.'"

And so for two full days,⁴ from earliest light until it was too dark to see anything but flashes of flame, the wholesale slaughter continued, Grant losing more than one opportunity to end it, through the tardiness of some general—steeped as was the Army of the Potomac in the belief that Bobby Lee could not be beaten—to carry out the orders for bold advance, letting golden opportunity slip while the enemy had time to concentrate reinforcements at the weakest point. But even those closest to Grant have conflicting views as to the effect upon the man himself. Porter states that after having given his final orders providing for every contingency which might arise Grant "threw himself down upon his camp-bed. Ten minutes thereafter an alarming report was received from the right. I . . . found him sleeping . . . as peacefully as an infant. His military instincts convinced him that it was a gross exaggeration . . . and he immediately went to sleep again."

But Wilson, on the authority of Rawlins and Bowers, records that while Grant met every situation with outward calm and self-possession, on that appalling night, after giving such orders as the emergency called for, "he withdrew to his tent and, throwing himself face downward on his cot, instead of going to sleep, gave vent to his feelings in a way which left no room to doubt that he was deeply moved. . . . No one knew better than he,"

⁴On the second day for breakfast Grant "took a cucumber, sliced it, poured some vinegar over it." That and "a cup of coffee" was his meal. From *Campaigning with Grant*, by Horace Porter.

The Battle of the Wilderness

continues Wilson, "that he was face to face with destiny, and there was no doubt in their minds that he realized it fully and understood perfectly that retreat from that field meant a great calamity to his country as well as to himself. That he did not show the stolidity that has been attributed to him in that emergency but fully realized its importance is greatly to his credit. It rests upon the concurrent testimony of those two faithful officers, that he not only perfectly understood the situation but was the first to declare that the enemy, not having fully improved his advantage, had lost a great opportunity. It was also Grant who was first to see with the clear vision of a great leader that the true way out of the perils which surrounded him was to leave the care of his right flank to the imperturbable Sedgwick, and push his army, as soon as it could see its way, through the Wilderness on its forward march 'towards Richmond.' "

Yes, the secret of the torch held high is later given to us by the good Wilson:

"Knowing how important it was that both Grant and Meade should be immediately advised as to the exact state of affairs . . . I rode myself rapidly to the former. Naturally, I was full of anxiety as to the effect upon Grant of the exciting incidents of the two days previous and especially of the night before, and hence went as fast as my horse could carry me. I reached headquarters on a little wooded knoll in the Wilderness at, or shortly after, seven o'clock, and dismounting at the proper distance, I had started up the hillside when Grant caught sight of me, and before receiving my report, called out cheerily:

Grant's Last Stand

"It's all right, Wilson; the army is moving towards Richmond."⁵

Sherman, too, far away then but cognizant of the crisis, thinks this was the supreme moment of Grant's life: when, with full realization of what he had done, and the murder which he must still inflict on the young manhood of the nation, Grant resolutely picked his way forward through 10,000 corpses, and calmly, specifically, gave the order for advance. "It's all right, Wilson; the army is moving towards Richmond." Slaughter it was, but the way of rigid mercy in the end.

§ 4

The morning and evening were the third day since the clash. At dusk of the third, quietly like a tired fisherman homebound from the stream, Grant stole forward, feeling his way along the timbered roads on the south of the Wilderness. Until they came to what was known as Brock road they might have been going in either direction—presumably reeling backwards, as the Army of the Potomac was accustomed after every clinch with Virginia's strength. But when they reached the fork and Grant's face was still headed towards Richmond, "the wildest cheers" burst forth from those on foot, or lying wounded on the ground; and it seemed as if they joined in the buoyant chorus: "It's all right, Wilson; the troops are headed for Richmond!"

To Grant, always practical and, like really dramatic people, impervious of drama, the applause was disturb-

⁵J. H. Wilson, *The Life of John A. Rawlins*.

The Battle of the Wilderness

ing, since it might indicate their movements to the enemy.

The Wilderness was not in those days so much a forest as "a deserted mining region, the home of the whippoor-will and the bat and the owl. Between the numerous creeks and inlets are oak-covered ridges and knolls. The sweet-gum and the cedar and the low pine lift their tops just above the dense undergrowth."⁶

§ 5

The Brock road curves in a generally southeastward direction along the gentle slopes between the headwaters of the Po and Ny rivers. Along this darkened lane Grant, Meade and a small cavalry escort trotted or walked stealthily forward toward a bivouac at Todd's Tavern on the way to Spottsylvania. Southeast a little way of the Piney Branch Meeting House some of the trees were not yet touched by shot or scorched by flames; and along toward midnight a slight breeze began to stir the branches along the ridge, and there were sibilant sounds as the leaves began to gossip one with another, and the branches rustled mysteriously.

It may have been taut nerves, rasped beyond their usual sharpness of perception; but at times during the night other eerie voices beyond the shadow—voices by rights inexorably still—seemed to rise out of the ground from nowhere, to float toward the marchers, to whisper soft encouragement:—"Wilson . . . Richmond . . . All's right, Wilson. . . ."

⁶Colonel J. F. C. Fuller, *The Generalship of Grant*.

PART TWO

CHAPTER XV

Disaster at Cold Harbor

§ 1

DO YOU know that colored people have no regular time for sleeping?" General Grant wrote during the latter part of his illness in one of his memoranda to Doctor Douglas. "They are social, and visit other servants when the families are asleep and catch their rest during the day every moment when they are not at work. I venture that you will never find a colored person in their beds."¹

Having no ear for music, nor for eerie effects, Grant did not remark upon the darky's love for harmony expressed in rhythmic religion. General Horace Porter, however, describes the jubilant reaction of the men when, buoyed by the sense of forward movement after the first clash with Robert Lee, they were led out of the shadow of the Wilderness. The following morning—it happened to be Sunday—a regimental band, recognizing the leader on horseback, struck up a popular Negro campground melody. Every one began to laugh and Rawlins called out, "Good for the drummers!"

"What's the fun?" General Grant asked.

¹In those informal "chits" the General's grammar was also informal. It will be recalled that he cautioned Doctor Douglas not to display them. "Some day they will be coming up against my English," he wrote in one of them.

Grant's Last Stand

Rawlins, riding abreast, replied: "They are playing 'Ain't I glad to get out of de Wilderness?'"

Grant tossed away his cigar butt and permitted himself a chuckle: "Well, with me a musical joke always needs explanation. I know only two tunes; one is 'Yankee Doodle,' and the other isn't."

Grant, however, did share with the colored people the faculty of requiring less sleep than the average man. He could sit in the saddle as long as Napoleon. He could fight all day under the most severe strain, and write his orders at midnight when all was quiet, as he did after the first day's battle at Chattanooga; on other occasions between campaigns he could sit outside his tent in the cool of the evening, as Charles A. Dana testified, and talk to a friend quietly, and sometimes drolly, until all hours—for he had a conversational humor that is not reflected in his writing. But when he did retire he had the ability to sleep, much as did Hindenburg. General Meade, on whom the final responsibility did not rest, was so exhausted after the first day's battle at the Wilderness that he was reputed to have been unfit for heavy effort until noon of the next day. Not so Grant.

During the thirty days and 'thirty nights from the crossing of the Rapidan to the crossing of the James there was little sleep for any one. On the offensive, with a longer line to protect and with more men to employ, Grant kept at it hammer and tongs until the country stood aghast at the drenching of its soil. "I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer," he wrote back to Halleck. Probably both Grant and Lee underestimated one another. Grant's initial statement that the

Disaster at Cold Harbor

Army of the Potomac "had never been fought out" indicates that he expected to see that it was fought out. He did not think it would take all summer and all winter and part of the next spring. Next after the Wilderness came Spottsylvania Court House with its five days' bloody fighting and after that Cold Harbor with its fruitless assault, which Grant admits to have been wrong, and after that the crossing of the James River, upon hearing of which Lincoln wired: "I begin to see it; you will succeed. God bless you all." After the Wilderness Lee had not once accepted battle in the open but had dug in to withstand assaults. "It was a new and strange experience for him," as Coolidge² puts it. "This master in the artistry of war now found his match in one less skilled in tactics but stronger in offense and in tenacity. No matter how he played his tempered sword, no matter how he turned and stepped with faultless strategy, there stood Grant facing him like a decree of Fate."

What were Lee's real thoughts, forced as he was to keep up appearances and refusing as he afterwards did to write his memoirs, no one can accurately know. His son, Captain Robert E. Lee,³ states that during the thirty-odd days from the Wilderness to Petersburg he saw his father only once or twice but that he felt "it would all end well. The feeling of trust we had in him was simply sublime. When I say 'we,' I mean the men of my age and standing, officers and privates alike." But in spite of the miraculous belief in "Marse Robert," as he was affectionately called, he must have seen more clearly

²Louis A. Coolidge, *The Life of U. S. Grant.*

³Robert E. Lee, *Recollections and Letters of General Lee.*

Grant's Last Stand

than others the inevitable outcome. He must have felt, though he denied, the feeling in his marrow after the very first encounter, and the feeling must have become a certainty when, for political purposes, he was ordered to hold fast to Richmond, though his army could easily in 1864 have moved out to open country.

§ 2

Yet our main concern is with Grant as his pen drives us forward through the prolonged campaign which ended in the investment of Petersburg. Neither from Grant's letters to Doctor Douglas, nor from Douglas's diary, nor from the footnote in the *Memoirs* is it entirely clear in what order the *Memoirs* were written after the fatal night in April 1885 when Grant nearly died of hemorrhage. The footnote merely states that the work was written "from this point on . . . after his great illness in April" with the exception of the campaign in the Wilderness which had been previously written.

Grant planned of course to reach Spottsylvania ahead of Lee, and he writes that if he had been successful there would presumably "have been a race between the two armies to see which could reach Richmond first, and the Army of the Potomac would have had a shorter line. Thus, twice since crossing the Rapidan we came near closing the campaign, so far as battles were concerned, from the Rapidan to the James River or Richmond." (His other reference is to the failure of General Burnside to follow up the success gained over Hill's corps on May 6, a.m.). Because the woods were still on fire, An-

Disaster at Cold Harbor

derson's corps, under Lee, could not bivouac and pushed forward without orders. Thus without intention Lee was first to reach Spottsylvania Court House. "But accident often decides the fate of battle," Grant wrote of his disappointment; and went at it again. On May 12 at the Battle of Spottsylvania he drove in Lee's center, at what was known, without exaggeration, as the "Bloody Angle." He took numerous prisoners, and taking prisoners, according to all witnesses, was the news which cheered him most, because it meant that lives were spared. The troops fought 'all out' for the man who had led them out of the Wilderness, and most of the general officers did likewise.

Hancock's work was notable—

"The ground over which Hancock had to pass to reach the enemy was ascending and heavily wooded to within two or three hundred yards of the enemy's intrenchments. In front of Birney there was also a marsh to cross. But, notwithstanding all these difficulties, the troops pushed on in quick time without firing a gun, and when within four or five hundred yards of the enemy's line broke out in loud cheers, and with a rush went up to and over the breastworks. Barlow and Birney entered almost simultaneously. Here a desperate hand-to-hand conflict took place. The men of the two sides were too close together to fire, but used their guns as clubs. . . . Hancock's corps captured some four thousand prisoners —among them . . . a brigade commander—twenty or more guns with their horses, caissons, and ammunition, several thousand stand of arms, and many colors."

Horace Porter describes Grant at the vortex of com-

Grant's Last Stand

mand. "When I arrived [Note by author: it must have been about 4:30 A.M.] the General was up and sitting wrapped in his overcoat close to a campfire which was struggling heroically to sustain its life against the assaults of wind and rain. . . . At 5:30 A.M. an officer came galloping through the woods with a report from Hancock saying he had captured the first line of the enemy's works. This officer was closely followed by another, who reported that many prisoners had been taken. Fifteen minutes later came the announcement that Hancock had captured two general officers. . . . As aides galloped up one after the other in quick succession with stirring bulletins, all bearing the glad tidings of overwhelming success, the group of staff officers standing about the campfire interrupted their active work of receiving, receipting for, and answering dispatches by shouts and cheers which made the forest ring. General Grant sat unmoved upon his camp-chair, giving his constant thoughts to devising methods for making the victory complete. At times the smoke from the struggling campfire would for a moment blind him, and occasionally a gust of wind would blow the cape of his great-coat over his face, and cut off his voice in the middle of a sentence. Only once during the scene he rose from his seat and paced up and down for about ten minutes. He made very few comments upon the stirring events which were crowding so closely upon one another until the reports came in regarding the prisoners. When the large numbers captured were announced, he said, with the first trace of animation he had shown: 'That's the kind of news I like to hear. I had hoped that a bold dash at day-

Disaster at Cold Harbor

light would secure a large number of prisoners. Hancock is doing well.' ”

General Johnson, one of the captured, was with Grant and Meade when a further dispatch came from Hancock saying, “I have finished up Johnson and am now going into Early.” According to Porter, Grant passed the dispatch around, but out of consideration for Johnson’s feelings did not as usual read it aloud.

But General Warren and General Burnside, each of whose facial flanks were protected by an outpost of whiskers today known as sideburns, both missed golden opportunities. Grant was getting to know his subordinates, but could not rearrange the team in the midst of action. Wilson wanted Grant to scalp “at least a dozen major-generals.”

“But where shall we get generals to fill their places?” Grant asked.

To which Wilson says he replied, “Oh, that’s easy! To use a favorite phrase of yours, every brigadier in this army ‘will step up and take sugar in his’n.’ ”

Lee counter-attacked all day and at nightfall being on the inner salient withdrew behind entrenchments, stepping backward but by no means on the run. That night 10,000 more young men were dead, wounded or missing from the Northern ranks. The Southern losses were also heavy, and Lee could ill afford to be a spend-thrift with his smaller allowance of bodies.

Gradually the trail of red led southward. It led through Spottsylvania with its five days of battle; through Guiney Bridge and Guiney’s Station and Bowling Green and North Anna. Hancock’s corps, which had “been

Grant's Last Stand

marching and fighting continuously for several days, not having had rest, even at night much of the time," was permitted to rest on the 22d. At sundown of the 22d Grant sent word through Meade, "Direct corps commanders to hold their troops in readiness to march at 5 A.M. tomorrow"—which meant another conflict. The red trail led to the assault at Cold Harbor, where, with the roofs of Richmond almost visible, Lee had entrenched in semicircle, and the Union soldiers rushed to more certain death than Pickett's men at Gettysburg, first pinning to their blouses their names and home and next of kin. Done today as matter of course, the invention at that time was the mother of desolation. For visual proof of the burden you must look at Brady's photograph of Grant,⁴ five minutes before and five minutes after ordering the assault. Even the mask of the mathematician seems to waver as it prepares for 6000 Union soldiers to be lost within an hour. Twenty years later, wrapped in pain in the red brick house in Sixty-sixth Street, New York, Grant confided to his pad, "I have always regretted that the last assault at Cold Harbor was ever made."⁵ And elsewhere reporting on the battles:

"Whether they might have been better in conception and execution is for the people who mourn the loss of friends fallen, and who have to pay the pecuniary cost, to say. All I can say is that what I have done has been done conscientiously, to the best of my ability, and in what I conceived to be for the best interests of the whole country."

⁴In *Photographic History of the Civil War*.

⁵*Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, Vol. II.

Disaster at Cold Harbor

What magic sustained Grant it is hard to say. Sorrow, even mourning, one reads here, but no apology. Perhaps it was that:

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten
Because my heart is pure.

CHAPTER XVI

Crossing the James River

§ 1

WHEN the last volley had been fired at New Cold Harbor it was apparent that General Lee's counter-offensives, which in reality covered a magnificent defense, had withstood Grant's sledgehammer north of Richmond. Not since Grant's coming had Southern morale been so high, and the converse was true. The losses at Cold Harbor, according to many statisticians of war, were not out of proportion for an attacking force; but much was made of them by the pacifist element in the North, and for political purposes by the opposition party running on the platform "the war is a failure." This lack of cohesive moral support is a factor to which Grant often refers in his *Memoirs*.

"Still, at the close of the Battle of Cold Harbor," the biographer McCormick sums up, "Lee had every reason to feel pleased. The feebleness of the attacks, the despondency of the prisoners, Grant's asking permission to rescue his wounded, all pointed to the end of the desperate battles that Lee had endured with the intrepidity of a Bayard. His refusal to allow Grant to save his wounded was entirely within the classic school of war of which he was the last great, perhaps the greatest, exponent. . . . It looked like a checkmate. Lee was still champion of those dimensions of war in which he was versed. To his consternation Grant knew a fourth dimension."

Crossing the James River

§ 2

Grant's initial plan had been to break Lee as far from sources of supply as possible. He was hampered by accidents to battles well conceived; by lack of familiarity with his officers, and by the timidity and slowness of some of these officers at crucial moments, and above all by the enchantment which "Marse Robert" had cast over both armies.

There is a wistful note in Grant's sick-room tribute to his rival, written twenty years later. "His (Lee's) praise was sounded throughout the entire North after every action he was engaged in: The number of his forces always lowered and that of the Nation's forces exaggerated. To be extolled by the entire press of the South . . . and by a portion of the press of the North with equal vehemence was calculated to give him the entire confidence of his troops and to make him feared by his antagonists."¹ Whatever the sacrifice, a mere glance at the map nevertheless reveals the inexorable advance from Culpeper to Cold Harbor. Long before Cold Harbor, Grant had developed a reserve plan.

In his *Memoirs* Grant records that on June 5, 1864, from Cold Harbor he wrote a long survey to Halleck at Washington in the course of which he stated: "My idea from the start [italics are the writer's] has been to beat Lee's army if possible north of Richmond; then after destroying his lines of communication on the north side of the James River to transfer the army to the south side

¹*Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant.*

Grant's Last Stand

and besiege Lee in Richmond, or follow him south if he should retreat. . . . I will continue to hold substantially the ground now occupied by the Army of the Potomac, taking advantage of any favorable circumstance that may present itself until the cavalry can be sent west to destroy the Virginia Central Railroad from about Beaver Dam for some twenty-five or thirty miles west. When this is effected I will move the army to the south side of the James River, either by crossing the Chickahominy and marching near to City Point, or by going to the mouth of the Chickahominy on north side and crossing there. To provide for this last and most possible contingency, several ferry-boats of the largest class ought to be immediately provided."

Petersburg, twenty miles south of Richmond, was the key to the Confederate capital, and even in this letter Grant does not reveal that he expected within a few days to capture Petersburg by assault, making it impossible for Lee to remain in Richmond. Then he would meet Lee in open battle between Richmond and Petersburg or farther west, for the terrain was such that Lee could not escape to the north. In spite of intervening failures this is exactly what did happen the following spring when the war ended.

Now for the first time was Lee thoroughly outguessed. To say that he was outgeneraled, in view of the many possibilities open to Grant and in view of the many contingencies which Lee must keep in mind, is to open a field of controversy beyond the present scope.²

Grant made a large-scale diversion to the north to

²Compare Douglas Southall Freeman in *R. E. Lee*.

Crossing the James River

distract Lee from his colossal plan of ferrying the army across the James River; and the diversion fitted so precisely with Lee's preconceived estimate of what Grant was likely to do that, in the face of growing evidence to the contrary, Lee did not appraise the new situation until too late. Apparently Lee did not allow Grant imagination. He could not conceive that Grant was well under way on an operation which Badeau says "transcended in difficulty . . . any that he had attempted during the campaign."³

Let Colonel Fuller sum up with Hooverlike statistics the engineering feat:

"The place selected to cross the James was at Wilcox's Landing, well protected on its western flank by Henry Creek. Here the river is 2100 feet wide, and in mid-channel some twelve to fifteen fathoms deep. The bridge constructed at this place was supported on ninety-two boats, and was thirteen feet wide. 'It was braced by three schooners anchored in eighty-five feet of water, near the center. The whole was laid in ten hours, and was finished at midnight' — a truly remarkable performance."⁴

Speaking of the crossing, Colonel Fuller continues: "The picture was a grand and awe-inspiring one. As the men, guns and vehicles approached the bridge, Grant stood on the bluff on the north side of the James and for a time watched them. He had a cigar between his lips and his hands were clasped behind his back. One continuous stream of artillery, infantry and wagons moved onwards below him; and near the approach to the

³Badeau: *Military History of U. S. Grant*.

⁴The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant, Colonel J. F. C. Fuller.

Grant's Last Stand

bridge were assembled masses of troops. The stream of ferries glided backwards and forwards, loaded with supplies and ammunition. Drums and bands were playing, and in the distance could be heard the booming of the guns. As the soldiers saw their general they began to cheer. This cheering and the shouting out of orders, the rumbling of wheels and the shriek of steam sirens mingled in the morning air in a discord of strange noises. Above all the sun shone brightly, flashing on the rifle barrels, smiting the waters of the river with glittering, quivering tongues of flame. Then the blue sky became veiled with dust, swallowing up the men and their gay colors as the unending stream moved onwards."

In permitting Grant to cross the James, Lee in fact was completely deceived, first by Sheridan's movement, second by Warren's and as stated, by his own conception of Grant's methods of action. "Thus the last, and perhaps the best chances of Confederate success," the rebel General E. P. Alexander admits, "were not lost in the repulse of Gettysburg, nor in any combat of arms. They were lost during the three days of lying in camp believing that Grant was hemmed in by the broad part of the James below City Point, and had nowhere to go but to come and attack us."

When the truth became known Lee burst out at his subordinates in one of the rare cases where his anger was vented on another: "Stonewall Jackson would never have permitted it!"

Meanwhile Grant had wired to Lincoln in Washington that the Army of the Potomac was crossing the River James on pontoon bridges and that in all probability he

Crossing the James River

would have Petersburg in hand before Lee could get there. Back came dots and dashes from the old Tycoon, as John Hay used in lighter moments to call the Great Emancipator:

“I begin to see it. You will succeed. God bless you all.”

The crossing of the James, the protection of the troops while crossing, the diversion of sufficient of Lee's units were carried out according to classic plan; yet with all elements favorable and at that time a pitifully small force to oppose him before Petersburg, General W. F. Smith, in whom Grant had reposed so much confidence since Chattanooga days, failed miserably. An enemy outpost delayed him for an unconscionable time. In the first attack of June 15 he took more than two miles of the enemy's front line, captured five riders and should have marched his entire command through the gap. He had at least three times the force of the enemy. Instead of that, in answer to urgent telegrams from General Butler, he kept calling for “reinforcements immediately.” So Beauregard, Lee's defender of Petersburg, playing his part with great skill and bluff, was able to evade Grant's strangle hold; to hold out till reinforcements came and the town could be fortified; to postpone Grant's victory for another nine months. Let Colonel Fuller⁵ again sum up the situation:

Beauregard saves Lee, Smith ruins Grant's strategy; Meade lets the critical moment pass by, and Butler fails to appreciate that it has arrived. . . . Lastly, turning to Grant, what do we

⁵*The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant*, Colonel J. F. C. Fuller.

Grant's Last Stand

see? Recrimination? — no; excuses? — no; blame? — no. His plan has been wrecked; victory has been bungled out of his hands; clouds are gathering in the Valley of Virginia: that he has failed is obvious, and he accepts failure not as a defeated man, but as one who sees in every failure a fresh incentive to further action. His reticence at this moment is truly heroic; it is work and not failure which absorbs him. Nothing unhinges him, or weakens his faith in himself and in final victory. He soars above his subordinates, forgetting their mistakes so that he may waste not a moment in shouldering aside their blunders. . . . If he cannot destroy Lee, then he will destroy his communications; if he cannot destroy his communications, then he will invest Petersburg. Though means vary, his idea remains constant, he holds fast to Lee, so that Sherman's manœuvre may continue.

§ 3

All the rest of the summer and all of the following winter Grant kept Lee bottled up in Petersburg. This does not mean that during the remainder of the summer before the cold set in, there was no more fighting. It meant that warfare of movement so far as Grant and Lee were concerned had necessarily given way to a kind of trench warfare. It meant that Grant held grimly to the body while others skinned the legs, to give Lincoln's simile another twist. Thomas who stormed Nashville, and Sherman who barnstormed through the vitals of the Confederacy, and Sheridan who whirled through the Shenandoah Valley, reaped all the glory from the Northern point of view, and in the case of Sherman, long-to-be-remembered anger from the South. It meant that

Crossing the James River

there was talk of conferring the equal rank of lieutenant-generalcy upon Sherman with the possibility open of giving Sherman supreme command over Grant. When Sherman's light outshone that of Grant, whom people accused of loafing at City Point—headquarters of the army besieging Petersburg—while others did the fighting, it resulted in Sherman's writing the finely characteristic letter to his chief: "I would rather have you in command than anybody else, for you are fair, honest, and have at heart the same purpose that should actuate all. I should emphatically decline any commission calculated to bring us into rivalry." To which Grant replied: "No one would be more pleased at your advancement than I, and if you should be placed in my position and I put subordinate, it would not change our relations in the least. I would make the same exertions to support you that you have ever done to support me, and I would do all in my power to make our cause win."

During this period Lincoln's depression of mind became acute. So strong was the doubt of his own re-election with General McClellan as a candidate against him, that Lincoln wrote on August 23 that famous sealed memorandum across the back of which, without apprising them of its contents, Lincoln asked the members of his Cabinet to sign their names:

"This morning, as for some days past, it seems exceedingly probable that this Administration will not be re-elected. Then it will be my duty to so co-operate with the President-elect as to save the Union between the election and the inauguration; as he will have secured

Grant's Last Stand

his election on such grounds that he cannot possibly save it afterwards."

Lincoln said afterwards that he feared his ability to keep the pledge and so had asked all the members of the Cabinet to sign their names as a riveting reminder.

CHAPTER XVII

The Winter of Discontent

§ 1

DURING that summer of apparent stalemate Grant held fast to the body while Sherman, Sheridan and Thomas skinned the legs.

The assault on Petersburg failed, but the investment was by degrees completed. As Lee had correctly prophesied before Grant crossed the James River,¹ once Petersburg had fallen it could be only a matter of time before Lee was squeezed out of Richmond. But the winter of Yankee discontent was still to intervene.

Failure to capture Petersburg as expected on June 15 temporarily disheartened the Northern army. After Cold Harbor and the crossing of the James, they looked forward to relief from fighting against intrenched positions and the consequent loss of blood. Lee, having at last fathomed toward which goal Grant's concealed play was directed, speedily dispatched his forces to Petersburg; entrenchments were hardened into fortifications; and on June 18 Grant ordered "no more assaults." However, when Grant told Lincoln he was unwilling to break his hold, Lincoln wired back:

"Neither am I willing. Hold on with a bull-dog grip, and chew and choke as much as possible."

Sheridan was dispatched with two divisions of cavalry to destroy as much as he could of the Virginia Central

¹R. E. Lee, by Douglas Southall Freeman.

Grant's Last Stand

Railroad and there was also a move against the Weldon Railroad, both of which were necessary for Southern supplies. The Weldon Railroad was captured by the Union forces at a later time.

Bottled up in Petersburg, his arteries of supply cut off one after another, the gallant Lee made a daring and nearly successful attempt to pierce the heart of the North. It was his next to last offensive.

In both Grant and Lee there is now something awful to contemplate. The former fighting for a cause he heartily believed in, with the desperate use of human material which he believed the only way to end it—yet so sensitive of criticism that he could not articulate response. The latter fighting for a cause he half believed in,² but for a State and people whose bone was in his being. In the end Lee's death was hastened by the unforgiving tactics of the conquering State; Grant's death was hastened by the ungratefulness of Congress.

At all events, Lee in a desperate counter-offensive sent General Early whirling up the Shenandoah Valley, where he met and dispersed Hunter, who was hampered by lack of ammunition. The valley was left open and Washington was uncovered. But General Lew Wallace, whom Grant had criticized for getting lost on his way to the Battle of Shiloh,³ and who was now in command of headquarters at Baltimore, retrieved himself hand-

²The statement more accurately refers to Lee's perplexed state of mind at the outbreak of the rebellion.

³Receiving shortly before his death a letter from General Lew Wallace's widow, Grant writes that new evidence makes it probable that Wallace's delay at Shiloh was due to inexperience in interpreting dispatches sent to him. Doctor Douglas indicates that Grant lay awake in worry about being fair to all concerned.

The Winter of Discontent

somely. With an obviously inferior force he moved out with "commendable promptitude," Grant records, and gave battle to Early at Monocacy. Beaten as expected, he delayed Early for an entire day. Meantime, General Wright, who had been dispatched to man the entrenchments around Washington, was able to arrive in time to save the capital.

§ 2

Returning to the main theatre of war in June, 1864, Colonel Pleasants, Pennsylvania mining engineer, suggested digging a mine under the Confederate works. General Burnside approved and General Meade disapproved to the extent that his co-operation was not of the best. The mine was eventually tunnelled through a main gallery to a depth of 510 feet broad by 75 wide.⁴ The Confederates knew tunnelling was going on but Lee was advised that no tunnel of more than 300 feet could be made owing, among other things, to lack of oxygen. They were apprehensive but they also joked about it, saying on one day that the mine was laid as far as the corner of such and such a street, and on another day had advanced to such and such a street, beneath Petersburg. The Union object of course was to blow a breach in the enemy works, rush through troops to the high ground behind and carry the fortifications in reverse.

For the actual assault, after the springing of the mine, a colored division under General Ferero (a former dancing master) had been chosen and carefully drilled. Meade interfered with this—possibly on the psycho-

⁴Grant says eighty feet,

Grant's Last Stand

logical grounds that the Southern troops would be raised to a pitch of unexampled fury and heroism by the sight of colored troops. Ledlie's undrilled division was therefore substituted at the last minute. Grant pays him the lowest tribute that one soldier can pay another, saying that before his troops rushed into the crater "their commander found some safe retreat."⁵ Grant wrote:

There was some delay about the explosion of the mine so that it did not go off until about five o'clock in the morning. When it did explode it was very successful, making a crater twenty feet deep and something like a hundred feet in length. Instantly one hundred and ten cannon and fifty mortars, which had been placed in the most commanding positions covering the ground to the right and left of where the troops were to enter the enemy's lines, commenced playing. Ledlie's division marched into the crater immediately on the explosion, but most of the men stopped there in the absence of any one to give directions; their commander having found some safe retreat to get into before they started. . . .

There had been great consternation in Petersburg, as we were well aware, about a rumored mine that we were going to explode. . . . I somewhat based my calculations upon this state of feeling, and expected that when the mine was exploded the troops to the right and left would flee in all directions. . . . It was just as I expected it would be. We could see the men running without any apparent object except to get away. It was half an hour before musketry firing, to amount to anything, was opened upon our men in the crater. It was an hour before the enemy got artillery up to play upon them; and it was nine o'clock before Lee got up reinforcements from his right to join in expelling our troops.

The effort was a stupendous failure. It cost us about 4000

⁵Ledlie remained in a dugout, it is reported.

The Winter of Discontent

men, mostly however, captured; and all due to inefficiency of corps commander and the incompetency of the division commander who was sent to lead the assault.

Again Grant had failed through subordinate jealousies and faulty execution. Concealing his mortification, he did, however, vent his pent-up feelings to Jacob Ammen, commander of the famous battleship *Monitor*. Among other things, Grant is reported to have stated:⁶

The enemy was completely surprised, and commenced running in all directions. There was nothing to prevent our men from marching directly to the high ground in front of them, to which they had been directed to go. Once there, all the enemy's fortifications would have been taken in reverse, and no stand could have been made. It is clear that without a loss of 500 men we could have had Petersburg, with all its artillery and many of its garrison. But our troops stopped in the crater made by the explosion. The enemy was given time to rally and reoccupy his line. Then we found, true enough, that we had the wolf by the ears. He was hard to hold and more dangerous to let go. This was so outrageous that I shall have a court of inquiry to sift the matter.

§ 3

New Cold Harbor and the mine explosion were generally considered Grant's most impotent and costly efforts. The date was July 30, 1864. But Grant was becoming more and more a politically minded general—that is to say he was becoming increasingly conscious of the necessity for “diversions” of public sentiment as well as diversions on the battlefield. Two days later, August 1,

⁶*General Grant*, by J. G. Wilson.

Grant's Last Stand

11:30 A.M. he writes to Halleck, in relation to the Valley Campaign:

I want Sheridan put in command of all the troops in the field, with instructions to put himself south of the enemy and follow him to the death. Wherever the enemy goes let our troops go also. Once started up the valley they ought to be followed until we get possession of the Virginia Central Railroad.

To which the President at 6 P.M. August 3 sent the following *characteristic* answer by cypher. (The adjective is Grant's.)

I have seen your dispatch in which you say, "I want Sheridan put in command of all the troops in the field, with instructions to put himself south of the enemy, and follow him to the death. Wherever the enemy goes, let our troops go also." This, I think, is exactly right, as to how our forces should move. But please look over the dispatches you may have received from here, even since you made that order, and discover, if you can, that there is any idea in the head of any one here, of "putting our army south of the enemy," or of "following him to the death" in any direction. I repeat to you it will neither be done nor attempted unless you watch it every day, and hour, and force it.

A. LINCOLN.

It was not until September and October of that year that Sheridan laid waste the beautiful Shenandoah Valley, laying waste with wide severity, and sending General Early careening backwards. Opequon Creek on September 19; Fisher's Hill on September 22; and Cedar Creek on October 19 were the three victories which made Sheridan the man of the hour, brought

The Winter of Discontent

credit back to Lincoln's administration and caused the country, as the modest sounding, but not really modest, Emancipator put it, "not to swap horses while crossing a stream." Lincoln's re-election, on a non-defeatist platform, was now assured. It occurred two weeks after the news of Cedar Creek reached Washington.

Grant's sick-room *Memoirs* as usual give the clearest consecutive account of Sheridan's movements in the Shenandoah Valley campaign as well as the difficulty encountered when Grant had to send his orders through the War Department, where they were often delayed and devitalized by Halleck. They also give an insight into Lincoln's whimsical mind. It appears that at one time in his riotous pursuit of Early, Sheridan got beyond where they could hear from him in Washington and "the President became very much frightened about him." The President was reminded "that the hot pursuit had been a little like that of General Cass was said to have been, in one of our Indian wars, when he was an officer of the army. Cass was pursuing the Indians so closely that the first thing he knew he found himself in their front, and the Indians pursuing him. The President was afraid that Sheridan had got on the other side of Early and that Early was in behind him."

§ 4

While Sheridan was cleaning up the Shenandoah Valley Grant's army continued its grip on Petersburg to the end that Lee could not divert troops elsewhere. For the time being Sheridan was the center of attention, but later

Grant's Last Stand

during that winter "Marching" Sherman became the Northern hero, feared and despised south of the Mason and Dixon line.

To Sherman's campaign in Georgia, including the famous sweet potato march from Atlanta toward the sea, Grant devotes nearly eighty typewritten pages. In view of the fact that the account was written *after* Grant's nearly fatal illness in April, 1885, and so far as the writer can discover, within four weeks of his death, the writing feat in itself is an extraordinary tribute to his right-hand officer.

In connection with the Atlanta campaign there was a story about Sherman which Grant was fond of telling.⁷ Grant wrote:

The rebel cavalry lurking in his rear to burn bridges and obstruct his communications had become so disgusted at hearing trains go whistling by within a few hours after a bridge had been burned, that they proposed to try blowing up some of the tunnels. One of them said:

"No use, boys, Old Sherman carries duplicate tunnels with him, and will replace them as fast as you can blow them up; better save your powder."

The most interesting feature of Grant's recital is the manner in which events seduced Sherman into his march. Then turned his operation into ravishing the state of Georgia. In the spring of 1864, as head of the department of the Mississippi, Sherman had three armies under his command: Thomas (Rock of Chickamauga) with 60,000 men in the center commanding the Army of the

⁷See also Sherman's *Memoirs*.

The Winter of Discontent

Cumberland; Schofield with 14,000 men in the Army of the Ohio; and McPherson's Army of the Tennessee with 25,000 soldiers on the right wing.

Sherman's original instructions were definite. Just as Grant knew that he must conquer Lee, regardless of territorial objectives, so Sherman knew that he must follow the army of General Joseph Johnston, wheresoever it went. Johnston retreated with the skill of General Washington playing fox in the New Jersey campaign of the American Revolution. Jefferson Davis, not fathoming Johnston's defensive skill, replaced him with General Hood. Here Grant's storehouse of personal information was valuable. "I know very well," said Grant, "the chief characteristics of Hood. He is a bold, dashing soldier, and has many qualities of successful leadership, but he is an indiscreet commander, and lacks cool judgment. We may look out now for rash and ill-advised attacks. . . ."

Unlike Grant, Sherman worried about what the other fellow was doing. Sherman did not relish the change of commanders. He said that you could calculate Johnston's movements with some degree of accuracy from the known rules of war, but that Hood's actions were "eccentric—I cannot guess his movements."⁸ Hood did attack Sherman three different times, losing in all approximately 20,000 men. But suddenly he evacuated Atlanta and Sherman promptly took possession. In so doing, however, Sherman was forced to stretch his line of communications, including of course telegraph as well as food and medical supplies, to a very great length. In order to

⁸Sherman's *Memoirs*.

Grant's Last Stand

protect them his forces were stretched equally thin. Allatoona, for example, was one of the points back from Atlanta along the line of communications. One night, looking back toward it from a high point Sherman could see the flare of scorching fires where Hood's men were burning the railroad ties for many miles.⁹ At Allatoona General Corse, a gallant volunteer officer, commanded the defenses, and was cut off from the remainder of the Union Army and attacked by overwhelming odds.

"Corse was a man who would never surrender," writes the usually restrained Grant. "From a high position some of Sherman's signal corps discovered a signal flag waving from a hole in the block house at Allatoona. It was from Corse. He had been shot through the face, but he signalled to his chief a message which left no doubt of his determination to hold his post at all hazards. It was at this point, probably, that Sherman first realized that with the forces at his disposal, the keeping open of his line of communications with the North would be impossible if he expected to retain any force with which to operate offensively beyond Atlanta."

As early as September 10 Grant had telegraphed to Sherman from City Point, Virginia:

So soon as your men are sufficiently rested, and preparations can be made, it is desirable that another campaign should be commenced. We want to keep the enemy constantly pressed to the end of the war. If we give him no peace whilst the war lasts, the end cannot be distant. Now that we have all of Mobile Bay that is valuable, I do not know but it will be the best move to transfer Canby's troops to act upon Savannah, whilst

⁹The night was October 5.

The Winter of Discontent

you move on Augusta. I should like to hear from you, however, in this matter.

To which Sherman had immediately replied:

If I could be sure of finding provisions and ammunition at Augusta, or Columbus, Georgia, I can march to Milledgeville, and compel Hood to give up Augusta or Macon, and then turn on the other. . . . If you can manage to take the Savannah River as high up as Augusta, or the Chattahoochee as far up as Columbus, I can sweep the whole State of Georgia.

And in answer to another dispatch, Sherman “then suggested that, when he was prepared, *his (own) movements should take place against Milledgeville and then to Savannah.*” Up to that time Mobile, which had been in Grant’s eye since the rejection of his plans in 1862, had been looked upon as the objective of Sherman’s army.

By the time Sherman’s lines of communication were actually severed, his own mind had been impregnated with the idea of the marauding march to the sea where, among other things, he was to reach Savannah. The fleet would then be his source of supply. Grant was cautious but finally gave Sherman consent and, in the *Memoirs*, full credit. The less fit men were left behind. Light equipment was the order of march, and regiment after regiment swung off on a trip which in later years must have been studied by the German General Staff in their plans for Belgium. By his own confession Sherman made war hell. Staccato as is Grant’s account you can almost hear the rhythm of the legions as they gather momentum from Atlanta to the sea, while they are marching through Georgia.

Grant's Last Stand

Throughout the story there is no sound of Grant's sickness: only exultant movement of his pencil as page after page yields professional credit to Sherman.

Sherman reached Savannah on the coast on December 21. He was within sight of the city on December 10. He delayed entry in order to offer Savannah to Lincoln as a Christmas present.

§ 5

After finishing the account of Sherman's Georgia campaign the invalid writer had another relapse, according to Doctor Douglas's diary. The doctor in his formal entry refers to a reaction from "cerebral exaltation . . . attendant upon literary endeavor."

CHAPTER XVIII

All Quiet at City Point

BY THE time Sherman reached the sea winter had also reached Grant's log-cabin headquarters at City Point, Virginia. Here Grant improved the iron circle about Lee's Petersburg, so far as winter conditions would permit, and from here he directed, so far as he considered advisable, the movements of subsidiary armies. After General Thomas had scored a smashing blow on General Hood at Nashville on December 15, 1864, the writing on the wall became more marked, and City Point took on the aspect of a second White House. To the little settlement came Lincoln, Senators, Congressmen, peace schemers, wives, and all others who could manage to have business. Secretary Chase had said, and Lincoln knew, that "All, under God, depends on Grant."

A Southern peace delegation, headed by Alexander Stephens of the Confederacy, arrived at City Point. The episode is interesting because of Mr. Stephens's impressions of his soldier host told in the former's reminiscences.¹ He was surprised to find the nation's military destiny in the hands of so simple a man.

He [Grant] was plainly attired, sitting in a log cabin busily writing on a small table by a kerosene lamp. There was nothing

¹*Recollections of Alexander H. Stephens.*

Grant's Last Stand

in his appearance or surroundings which indicated his official rank. There were neither guards nor aides about him. Upon Colonel Babcock rapping at his door the response, "Come in," was given by himself. . . . In manners he is simple, natural, and unaffected; in utterance frank and explicit; in thought, perception and action, quick; in purpose fixed, decided, and resolute.

Grant gave the commissioners comfortable quarters on the steamer *Mary Martin*, anchored in the James River, and at Lincoln's request later sent them to Hampton Roads, where the President journeyed down from Washington to meet them near the end of December, 1864. The negotiations held on the steamer *River Queen* were foredoomed to failure. It might better be said that there were no negotiations. As a prerequisite to cessation of hostilities Lincoln insisted on:

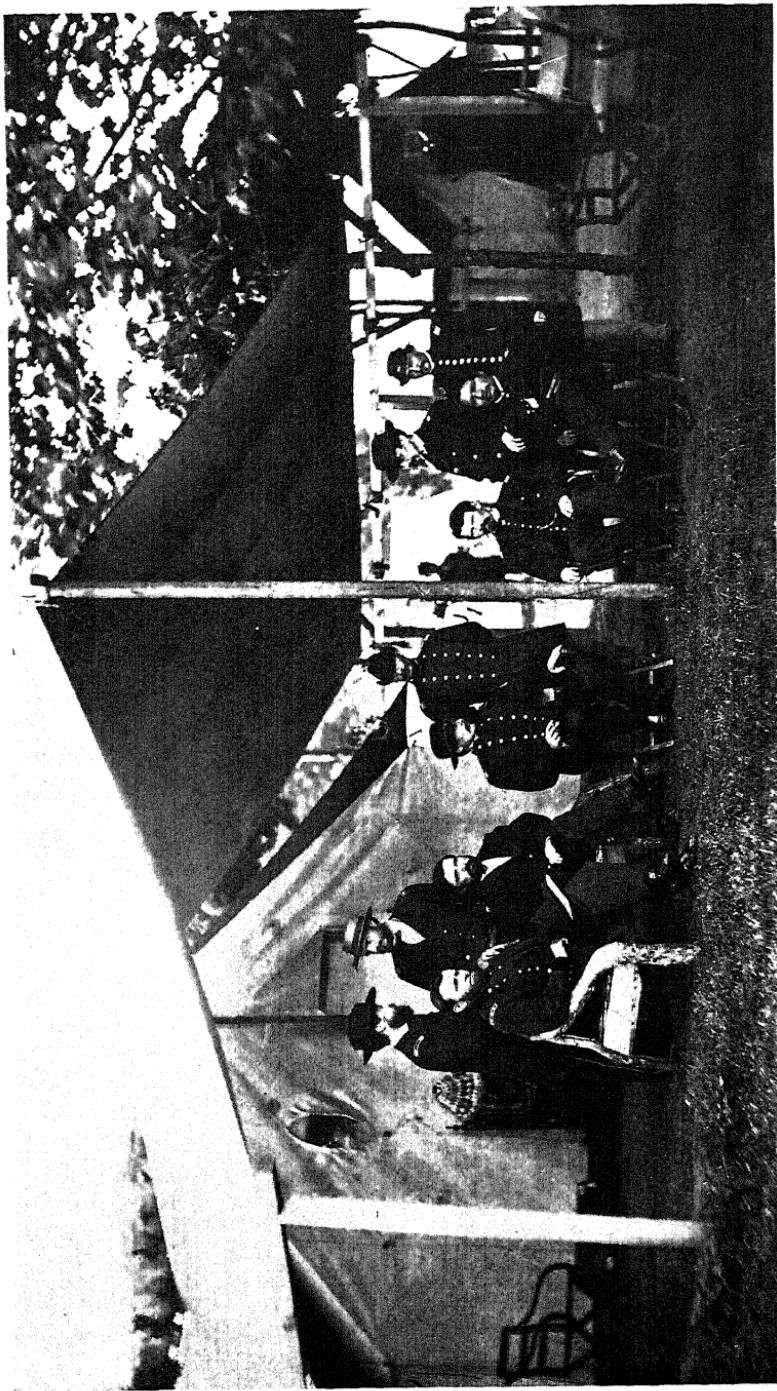
(1) Restoration of national authority. (2) The end of slavery. (3) Disbanding of all forces hostile to the government. The South was not yet ready to accept these terms, so there could be no discussion of peace. But the meeting was not without value as establishing in the minds of the commissioners Lincoln's friendly, un revengeful attitude toward the South once these terms should be met. Best of all was a new Lincoln anecdote. It appears that Commissioner Hunter, for the South, launched on a long argument to persuade Mr. Lincoln that it was proper for him (Lincoln) to enter negotiations with Jefferson Davis as President of an opposing State. The North, of course, had never recognized a separate State. Mr. Hunter referred to the precedent of King Charles I and elaborated on the fact that Charles



Courtesy of F. H. Meserve

Grant, Fred D. Grant, and Mrs. Grant, City Point

Young Fred was apprehended as a spy, Confederate marines did not believe
he was "just fishing"



Courtesy of R. H. Maserie

Standing: Adam Badcau, Constock (straw hat), Colonel Dent, Colonel Robinett
Sitting: Grant, Rawlins (Grant's conscience), Colonel Duff, Horace Porter, Colonel Parker (whom Lee apparently mistook for a Negro).

All Quiet at City Point

had not refused to enter negotiations with his rebel Parliament.

Suddenly the Great Emancipator's face took on that indescribable expression which often preceded his salutes and observed:²

"Upon questions of history I must refer you to Mr. Seward, for he is posted in such things. . . . My only distinct recollection of the matter is that King Charles lost his head!" That took the wind from Hunter's speech, and he subsided.

Mr. Stephens, the Confederate, whom both Lincoln and Grant appeared to like, was a very small man, but he wore at that time a tremendous coarse gray woolen overcoat of a kind then manufactured in the South. After the *River Queen* conference Lincoln came up to City Point to talk things over with Grant. He asked Grant if he had noticed Stephens's overcoat. Grant said "Yes." He asked Grant if he had noticed him take the coat off. Grant said "Yes."

"Well," said Lincoln, "didn't you think it was the biggest shuck and the littlest ear that ever you did see?"

Grant not only tells the anecdote but says that long afterwards he repeated it to Confederate General J. B. Gordon, who repeated it to Stephens, who "laughed immoderately" at his own expense.

Just prior to the Hampton Roads conference one of Grant's generals had fought a battle, the outcome of which had its effect on the Southern negotiations. After Jefferson Davis had removed General Joseph Johnston he

²Later verified by Lincoln. See Henry J. Raymond, *Life of Lincoln*, and *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*, by W. E. Barton.

Grant's Last Stand

put in his place General Hood. The latter crossed the Tennessee River near Muscle Shoals, followed and fought General Schofield at Franklin. General Thomas, strongly fortified and with plentiful troops, was at Nashville and Grant thought he should have moved out to reinforce Schofield at Franklin and "fight out the battle there." Instead of so doing, he allowed Hood to move upon Nashville and invest the place almost without interference.

There were possibilities that Hood would be enabled to get north of the Cumberland River. "The country was alarmed, the administration was alarmed, and I was alarmed lest that very thing would take place . . ." Grant writes. On December 2 Grant sent the first of a number of dispatches urging Thomas to strike Hood at once. Grant's impatience is evidenced by single sentences taken from the dispatches: "Dec. 2, A.M. If Hood is permitted to remain quietly about Nashville, you will lose all the road back to Chattanooga and possibly have to abandon the line of the Tennessee." "Dec. 2, 1:30 P.M. With your citizen employees armed, you can move out of Nashville with all your army and force the enemy to retire or fight upon ground of your own choosing." "Dec. 5. Hood should be attacked where he is. Time strengthens him in all possibility as much as it does you." "Dec. 6. Attack Hood at once and wait no longer for a remnant of your cavalry." "Dec. 8. Why not attack at once? . . . Use the means at your command, and you can do this and cause a rejoicing that will resound from one end of the land to the other." "Dec. 11. If you delay attack longer the mortifying spectacle will be witnessed of a rebel

All Quiet at City Point

army moving for the Ohio River, and you will be forced to act, accepting such weather as you find."

In justice to General Thomas it should be observed that we have not here noted his replies and that Thomas was a brave and methodical fighter. His methods were his own. Finally Grant told Thomas he would be forced to relieve him unless he acted immediately and the Commander-in-Chief set out for Nashville in person. On the way he got word of Thomas' splendid victory at the battle of Nashville where Hood was sent careening back. Grant was not one to quarrel with success: he congratulated Thomas handsomely and at the same time complained because the latter did not pursue the enemy with sufficient speed. But he made Thomas a major-general of regulars. Thus was Grant at the last moment saved from the serious mistake of removing an able lieutenant. It is probable that both Grant and Thomas were less to be criticized in their relations than has been the custom. The presumption is that Grant's final intention was to take charge personally at Nashville in order to avoid the humiliation of removing Thomas. In view of Thomas's smashing battle when at last he did fight (after giving Grant and the administration many impatient days), Grant's presence was, of course, unnecessary. The men remained on outwardly cordial, though not intimate terms, and Thomas dined at the White House when Grant was President.

CHAPTER XIX

Some Personal Anecdotes

BETWEEN the visit of the Southern peace commissioners in January, 1864, and the beginning of the final spring campaign there was a slight modulation in the tempo of events. Because Grant was under a cloud of comparative unpopularity, that is to say because Sherman and Thomas stole much of his thunder, it should have been a trying time for Grant: but among those who were closest to him it is reported that that phase of the situation did not concern him. He was, however, apprehensive because the initiative for escape from Petersburg must come from Lee. Acting came more easily to Grant than waiting for others to act.

During this comparative lull we may catalogue several unrelated details, which were omitted at the time of their occurrence in order not to interrupt the battle action. Most of these details Grant could not be expected to relate in the *Memoirs*.

On the second day of the Battle of the Wilderness General Grant smoked twenty cigars, all large and strong. In relation to cigar smoking the General told his aide, Horace Porter, about the inception of the habit.¹

¹In a previous chapter substantially the same version is given. I will allow both to stand.

Some Personal Anecdotes

Grant said that he had been a very light smoker previous to the attack of Fort Donelson. At Admiral Foote's request on that occasion he had gone aboard the flag boat in the river and had been given a cigar. On the road back to his command he was met by a staff officer who told him the enemy were attacking vigorously. While riding forward among the troops, giving the order for counter-attack (based on the rations he found in captured enemy knapsacks) it seems that Grant carried the unlighted cigar in his hand. "In the accounts published in the papers I was represented as smoking a cigar in the midst of the conflict; and many persons, thinking, no doubt, that tobacco was my chief solace, sent me boxes of the choicest brands from everywhere in the North. As many as 10,000 were soon received. I gave away all I could get rid of, but having such a quantity on hand, I naturally smoked more than I would have done under ordinary circumstances and I have continued the habit ever since."²

On this same second day of the Wilderness, Grant's breakfast consisted of a slice of cucumber dipped in vinegar and a strong cup of coffee. He then proceeded to a spot some 100 yards west of Wilderness Tavern, a knoll high enough to afford a view for some distance of the theatre of operations so far as the trees permitted. His orders for this day's fighting having been previously given he alternately smoked and whittled at a stick of pine wood. At times he would pace nervously back and forth bending forward and favoring the bad leg.

²Grant in conversation with Horace Porter, reported in *Campaigning with Grant*.

Grant's Last Stand

During another phase of the Wilderness battle Warren's corps was driven back at the point where his line was in front of general headquarters on the knoll. Here, as we have said, the commander walked back and forth receiving and dispatching members of the staff as messengers to various points of the lines, occasionally sitting on the stump of a tree, occasionally standing up to view, without change of expression, so much of the field as he could. (His later memorandum to Doctor Douglas says that he did not find field glasses of much use.) According to General Porter, "The enemy's shells were beginning to fall on the knoll where General Grant was seated on the stump of a tree, and it looked for a while as if the tide of battle would sweep over that point of the field. He rose slowly to his feet, and stood for a time watching the scene, and mingling the smoke of his cigar with the smoke of battle, without making any comments. His horse was in charge of an orderly just beyond the hill, but he evidently had no thought of mounting. An officer ventured to remark to him, 'General, wouldn't it be prudent to move headquarters to the other side of the Germanna road till the result of the present attack is known?' The General replied very quietly, between the puffs of his cigar, 'It strikes me it would be better to order up some artillery and defend the present location.' "

Once Grant had studied maps and heard reliable reports, the topography of a section remained clear in his mind. He did not constantly refer to maps. On this day, says Porter, "his speech was never hurried, and his manner betrayed no trace of excitability or even impatience.

Some Personal Anecdotes

He never exhibited to better advantage his peculiar ability in moving troops with unparalleled speed to the critical points on the line of battle where they were most needed, or, as it was sometimes called, ‘feeding a fight.’ ”

At the end of the crisis of the Wilderness came, as noted in a previous chapter, the consummate midnight march in which, rather than reeling back after a prolonged battle, Grant moved forward by the left flank toward Spottsylvania Court House.

On this occasion, Grant’s stubbornness, amounting almost to a fetish, against turning back on any road almost spelled disaster. The cheering of well, and wounded, men as Grant on his bay charger “Cincinnati” was observed to be headed toward Richmond has already been described, but the peculiar aftermath is little known. Owing to fires which contrived to burn in certain parts of the main road, the staff party turned off to the right at a certain point and the guide, a certain Colonel Comstock, became confused—in fact, was temporarily suspected of treachery, for suddenly the party found itself almost within enemy lines. Grant’s superstition asserted itself. Point blank he refused to turn back. He insisted that the guide find some crossroad leading to the Brock Road. It was only after considerable argument that the Commander-in-Chief’s common sense triumphed and that he permitted himself to go back to the fork of Brock Road and make a fresh start.³

It was on the afternoon of May 10 when Grant was returning to headquarters from an inspection trip that a

³Most fortunately since it was later discovered that at that moment Longstreet’s Confederate Corps was marching parallel to Grant.

Grant's Last Stand

wounded man from the 5th Wisconsin regiment on seeing a shell burst near where General Grant was sitting (the General looking up absently and continuing to write) remarked:

“Ulysses⁴ don’t scare worth a damn!”

On May 11—the day before the fight at the “Bloody Angle” of Spottsylvania—Grant decided to spend the day in reconnoitering the enemy intrenchments. Breakfast was a cup of coffee and “a small piece of beef cooked almost to a crisp.” Congressman Elihu B. Washburne, who had been at headquarters, was leaving for Washington and asked if he could not carry some message to the President and Secretary of War. Grant considered a moment and then said he preferred to write a report as usual to Halleck, but Washburne could carry it back with him. Grant stepped to the field table inside his tent and in a few moments came out with the famous letter, part of which follows:⁵

New Spottsylvania C. H. Va
May 11th 1864, 8.30 a.m.

Major General Halleck
Chief of Staff of Army,
General;

We have now ended the sixth day of very heavy fighting. The result to this time is much in our favor. But our losses have been heavy as well as those of the enemy. We have lost to this time eleven General officers killed wounded or missing, and probably twenty thousand men. I think the loss of the enemy must be greater. . . . I am now sending back to Belle

⁴Some versions say “Sam Grant don’t scare worth a damn.”

⁵*Campaigning with Grant*, by Horace Porter.

Some Personal Anecdotes

Plaines all my wagons for a fresh supply of provisions, and Ammunition, and propose to *fight it out on this line if it takes all summer.* . . .

Very respectfully,

Your ob't. sv't.

U. S. GRANT
Lt. Gen.

At the beginning of the midnight ride in the region of the Wilderness General Porter gives an incident which illustrates the different temperaments of two distinguished soldiers. Grant and staff stopped at General Hancock's headquarters on their route. ("Hancock the Superb," as he had been dubbed by the newspapers.) "Hancock's wound received at Gettysburg had not thoroughly healed, and he suffered such inconvenience from it when in the saddle that he had applied for permission to ride in a spring ambulance while on the march and when his troops were not in action. He was reclining on one of the seats of the ambulance, conversing with General Grant, who had dismounted and was sitting on the ground with his back against a tree, whittling a stick, when the sound of firing broke forth directly in front. Hancock sprang up, seized his sword, which was lying near him, buckled it around his waist, and cried: 'My horse! My horse!'

"The scene was intensely dramatic, and recalled vividly to the bystanders the cry of Richard III on the field of Bosworth. Grant listened a moment without changing his position or ceasing his whittling, and then remarked: 'They are not fighting; the firing is all on one side. It takes two sides to start a fight.' In a few minutes

Grant's Last Stand

the firing died away, and it was found that the enemy was not advancing.”

On the way to establishing his headquarters before the engagement at North Anna, the General decided to halt for a couple of hours at “a plantation situated on high ground, commanding a charming view of the valley of the Mattapony.”

We may here digress for a moment to say that Grant was sensible to scenery but not to painting. As a soldier in Mexico he wrote few letters. One of them written to his mother tells of the beauty of the mountainsides covered with palms which “toss to and fro in the wind like plumes in a helmet.” Every one who saw it tells of his rapt silence while watching from a height the panorama of his own army crossing the James River, before the first attack on Petersburg. He stood immovable. “His hands were clasped behind his back.”⁶ One of his last spoken requests to Doctor Douglas at Mt. McGregor was to carry him out to where he could see the south view toward the Hudson River valley. On the other hand he walked dumbly and obviously bored through the picture galleries abroad.

To return to the southern plantation with its charming view of the Mattapony:—the household contained as well a charming young lady—to view whom was not difficult—and her mother-in-law. According to the ubiquitous Porter,

General Grant bowed courteously and said, “With your permission, I will spend a few hours here.” The younger lady

⁶*General Grant*, by J. F. C. Fuller.

Some Personal Anecdotes

replied very civilly, "Certainly, Sir." The older one exclaimed abruptly, "I do hope you will not let your soldiers ruin our place and carry away our property." The General answered politely, "I will order a guard to keep the men out of your place, and see that you are amply protected"; and at once gave the necessary instructions.

The ladies, seeing that the officer with whom they were conversing was evidently one of superior rank, became anxious to know who he was, and the older one stepped up to me, and in a whisper asked his name. Upon being told that he was General Grant, she seemed greatly surprised, and in a rather excited manner informed the other lady of the fact. The younger lady, whose name was Mrs. Tyler, said that she was the wife of a colonel in the Confederate army, who was serving with General Joe Johnston in the West but she had not heard from him for some time, and she was very anxious to learn through General Grant what news he had from that quarter. The general said, "Sherman is advancing upon Rome, and ought to have reached that place by this time." Thereupon the older lady, who proved to be the mother-in-law of the younger one, said very sharply: "General Sherman will never capture that place. I know all about that country, and you haven't an army that will ever take it. We all know very well that Sherman is making no headway against General Johnston's army."

We could see that she was entertaining views which everywhere prevailed in the South. The authorities naturally put the best face upon matters, and the newspapers tried to buoy up the people with false hopes. It was not surprising that the inhabitants of the remote parts of the country were in ignorance of the true progress of the war. General Grant replied in a quiet way: "General Sherman is certainly advancing rapidly in that direction; and while I do not wish to be the communicator of news which may be unpleasant to you, I have every reason to believe that Rome is by this time in his possession." The older lady then assumed a bantering tone, and became somewhat excited and defiant in her manner; and the younger one

Grant's Last Stand

joined with her in scouting the idea that Rome could ever be taken. Just then a courier rode up with dispatches from Washington containing a telegram from Sherman. General Grant glanced over it, and then read it to the staff. It announced that Sherman had just captured Rome. The ladies had caught the purport of the communication, although it was not intended that they should hear it. The wife burst into tears, and the mother-in-law was much affected by the news, which was of course sad tidings to both of them.

Although Grant did not intend it so, this was round one in favor of the usurping Yankees, and the lady was considerably crestfallen.

Just at that moment General Burnside, of the side-whiskers, whose corps was marching past, dismounted, and walked, one might say "strode," in to join the party on the porch.

"He was a man of great gallantry and elegance of manner, and was always excessively polite to the gentler sex. He raised his hat, made a profound bow to the ladies, and, as he looked at his corps filing by on the road, said to the older one, who was standing near him, 'I don't suppose, madam, that you ever saw so many Yankee soldiers before.' She replied instantly: 'Not at liberty, sir.'"

Round two ended distinctly in favor of the Southern lady; and General Grant joined heartily and a little gleefully in the laugh which followed at General Burnside's expense.

General Grant left the spot with evident regret.

CHAPTER XX

Lincoln's "Little Rumpus"

SITUATED in the snug winter quarters at City Point —in conditions which were a far cry from those which existed at Valley Forge in Washington's day —General Grant was able to a certain extent to replenish his batteries for the final upheaval. Roughly speaking, every one understood that there would be an attempt at conclusive action so soon as the roads were passable in the spring. Actually Grant got under way before the roads were even passably passable:—troops squashed into swampy roads with mud above their ankles, horses floundered deeper, ammunition wagons were stalled, and dug out, or stalled and hauled out, or stalled and abandoned in quagmires of slush.

“Going through Virginia, trooper?” became a standard question; and the correct answer, “Yes, in several places.”

Generally speaking most officers and intelligent civilians believed that Grant's plan would be to close up the remaining arteries of supply on which Lee and the populace could depend for food and communication; putting it very briefly, that Grant would attempt either to squeeze Lee into Richmond or to squeeze him out. The details no one knew except Grant. Grant said appreciatively that Lincoln was the only man who had a right to know his plans, but that Lincoln never asked.

Grant's Last Stand

In putting his final campaign into effect Grant was aided by the personal characteristics already noted: clear vision of fundamentals, and lack of nerves, together with a control which enabled him to switch the batteries off at will. Only once did he suffer a breakdown which almost unfitted him, and that paradoxically was during the very hours when Lee was making up his mind to surrender. He had another helpful characteristic, a way of listening to all staff arguments about him, churning them over in his mind, and some time later announcing the most practical as if it had been his own invention, occasionally to the annoyance of Rawlins. There was a certain amount of truth in the saying, "Open up Grant's head and out come Rawlins's brains"—Rawlins's ideas, that is, tempered with judgment and adapted to Grant's uses. In regard to non-essentials Grant was lazy; refused to be bothered with any details of work or organization which could be handled by any one else, nor did he indulge in fretful overseeing of those to whom separate movements had been intrusted. If men failed, they were relieved. In short, he was a first-rate executive.

Partly through lack of interest in such matters, partly, one imagines, because it made him a less conspicuous target for sharpshooters, Grant did not dress in a manner that indicated his rank—unless one was standing near enough to see the shoulder straps. One day, puffing at the inevitable cigar, the Commander-in-Chief strolled down from the high plateau on which the City Point quarters were situated toward the wharf at the foot of the hill. When Grant was a few paces from the landing, a sentry on the end of the wharf called out "No smoking," but

Lincoln's "Little Rumpus"

according to an aide who was near by, Grant continued forward wrapped in thought. This time, the sentry called out sharply, "Put out that cigar," and added, "by order of the Commander-in-Chief."

According to the witness, Grant threw the cigar away with a disgusted gesture and mournfully watched it sizzling down the stream.

The reason for the strict supervision near the wharf was that in the previous August a Virginian had perfected an infernal machine, now well known but in those days a distinct invention—a "time bomb" which could be set for future explosions. He had slipped into the Union lines disguised as a laborer, reached City Point, and the pier where the terrific explosion occurred. One mounted orderly, several horses, and all the laborers on the pier were killed, and many others were wounded. Grant himself, sitting in front of his tent—the cabins had not yet been built—was covered with a shower of debris but not wounded. The investigating board which went into the matter thoroughly never discovered the secret, until some years after the war.

During the following winter Mrs. Grant, the eldest boy Fred, and Jesse came for a visit. Fred wanted to go bird shooting, but nobody could produce a shotgun (one of the staff officers is reported to have remarked grimly that they were accustomed to hunt bigger game), so young Fred tried his luck with a rifle, while the General stayed home to ponder plans, and Mrs. Grant stayed in the neighborhood of her "Ulyss." Sometimes of an evening they would hold hands in a corner of the cabin when no one was present except, perhaps, one of the

Grant's Last Stand

inner circle.¹ On the evening of the bird-hunting expedition Fred Grant returned home very late—and ruefully—with a tale of drifting down river in a rowboat and being arrested as a probable bomb-setting spy by some of the long shore naval pickets, who decided not to hang him by the yard arm until they had amused themselves by checking his preposterous story that he was “Frederick Dent Grant, sir, son of General Ulysses S. Grant, Commander-in-Chief, who will be very angry if I am killed,” etc.,² a tale, which at first excited the risibility of the pickets who believed it worthy of relaying to the marines!³ The General pretended to take the adventure very seriously.

§ 2

Planning for the capture of Fort Fisher; receiving the peace commissioners; many conferences with President Lincoln; settling the disposition of Sherman and Sheridan, and the question involved in the desire of the latter to be attached to Grant’s command rather than to Sherman’s; resisting the attack on Fort Stedman; relieving General Butler from duty; analyzing, encouraging or discouraging the countless plans presented to him for ending the war;—these were a few of the many decisions which ultimately rested on the uneasy head beneath the crown. With many of them he became in-

¹Ordinarily before strangers Mrs. Grant referred to her husband as “Mr. Grant.” Her own name for him was “Ulyss.” After the capture of Vicksburg, however, she often called him “Victor.” It is for this reason that at the end of Grant’s struggles, I repeat the trite objective, “victorious.”

²Actual words not vouched for.

³*Campaigning with Grant*, by Horace Porter.

Lincoln's "Little Rumpus"

creasingly impatient, even such simple schemes as supplying the army, each man with a bayonet a foot longer than that of the man opposite him, and presto! the enemy would be pinioned on steel.

Deepest and most continuously in his thoughts, however, was the possibility that Lee would somehow slip through the cordon, and the probability that before so attempting he would make a demonstration against some other part of the line.

§ 3

Grant's prophetic instinct in the latter respect was verified on March 25, a night when both General Meade and General Ord happened to be absent from the front. Meade had come back to City Point to meet Mrs. Meade, and Grant had asked him to spend the night. At daylight headquarters camp was roused by a message from the Petersburg front saying that Lee had broken through the Union lines near what was known as Fort Stedman. Telegraph lines had been smashed and communication was meager. A courier's dispatch was read to Grant through the door of the room in which he and Mrs. Grant were quartered, and, being a quick dresser, the commander was outside in less time than it takes to burn a two-foot fuse. Grant at once wired to the Army of the James:

"This may be a signal for leaving. Be ready to take advantage of it."

Couriers and messages went scurrying back and forth and two hours later word was received that Fort Stedman had been recaptured after a short but bloody strug-

Grant's Last Stand

gle, also that the whole of the dented front line had been straightened out, and many prisoners taken.

It is now known that early in March, 1864, Lee and Jefferson Davis had agreed—as Grant suspected they would—that Petersburg and Richmond were no longer safe and that they must escape as soon as possible. The demonstration at that point of the line between Fort Stedman and Battery Number 10 was for the purpose of causing a concentration of troops and creating a panic during which Lee's main army could slip away into North Carolina. The attack was skilfully planned. Southern deserters had long been crossing into Union trenches bringing their sidearms with them. Taking advantage of this practice the Confederate General Gordon had sent his pickets forward during the night. They captured the Union pickets along that portion of the sector without arousing the main line fifty yards in the rear. At daylight Gordon's charge successfully stormed the main line. "Turning to the right and left," Grant reports in the *Memoirs*, "they captured the fort (Stedman) and the battery, with all the arms and troops in them. Continuing the charge, they also carried Batteries Eleven and Twelve to our left, which they turned towards City Point.

Meade happened to be at City Point that night, and this break in his line cut him off from all communication with his headquarters. Parke, however, commanding the 9th Corps when this breach took place, telegraphed the facts to Meade's headquarters, and learning that the general was away, assumed command himself and with commendable promptitude made all preparations to drive the enemy back. General Tidball

Lincoln's "Little Rumpus"

gathered a large number of pieces of artillery and planted them in rear of the captured works so as to sweep the narrow space of ground between the lines very thoroughly. Hartranft was soon out with his division, as also was Willcox. Hartranft to the right of the breach headed the rebels off in that direction and rapidly drove them back into Fort Stedman. On the other side they were driven back into the intrenchments which they had captured, and Batteries eleven and twelve were retaken by Willcox early in the morning.

Parke then threw a line around outside of the captured fort and batteries, and communication was once more established. The artillery fire was kept up so continuously that it was impossible for the Confederates to retreat, and equally impossible for reinforcements to join them. They all, therefore, fell captives into our hands.

It so happened that Lincoln, whom Grant had invited to make another visit to the little White House, as Grant's headquarters were called, was on that night on his *River Queen* anchored in the James River; and the phraseology at the end of Lincoln's dispatch to Halleck in Washington:

Robert [Lincoln's son] just now tells me that there was a little rumpus up the line this morning, ending about where it began —

shows not only that the gaunt Emancipator felt confidence in Grant's pincer tactics; but the "little rumpus" also indicates that he had at last mastered the brutally laconic phraseology of the front.

The killed, wounded, or captured in Gordon's thrust at Fort Stedman Grant gives as 4000 Confederates, 2000 Union men. Compared to the laying of waste by Sherman (who was not the greatest of fighters in shock

Grant's Last Stand

warfare, but a veritable monster on the march); compared to the suffering caused by Sheridan's raids in the Shenandoah Valley, and the gradual destruction of railroads, roads, canals, on which hemmed-in Virginia could depend; compared to the ill-fated explosion in "Burnside's crater" by means of which Grant had hoped, months ago, to carry Petersburg—compared to all these the casualties in the Gordon-Lee demonstration against the Union line were not great. Listed against the Wilderness, Cold Harbor, Spottsylvania, The Bloody Angle, North Anna, and all the rest, they were scarcely worth a communiqué. Indeed, while the Army of the Potomac and the Army of the James had replenished their stomachs, while the officers had replenished the batteries of their nerves, all had been too quiet on the Petersburg front. The "little rumpus" which Lincoln reported was quite necessary. Two or three hours of it, that was all. When everything was back where it started, when the 6000 lost men had been budgeted as prisoners, wounded, or missing; when the stretcher-bearers, the nurses and the Sanitary Commission had made their customary reports, probably not more than a few hundred families, north and south, were entitled to receive a form notice regretting that because of a little rumpus, their son John Doe, Jr., was now their late son John Doe, Jr.—or to state it less prettily than the War Department does—that their brave-featured bit of God's handiwork had been reassembled into a semblance of a young man, hastily interred under six inches of Virginia mud, and was by this time a stinking mass of shell-torn putrefaction. . . .

CHAPTER XXI

Two Men

LINCOLN'S roots went deep into the soil of an ancestry which he had neither time nor inclination, in the course of his uncompleted life, to plow through to the bottom. Had Lincoln known what later investigators did,¹ he need not have worried about malicious stories, except for those relating to the reputation of his maternal grandmother, Sally Hanks.

Lincoln was a man unfathomably sad, from whom at times depression dripped like a fog; and he was a man infinitely humorous, as sad men often are. Grant's nature was comparatively buoyant; and for this reason he did not so often feel a need of going to the cupboard for a joke to feed his drooping thoughts.

The little engine with the huge smokestack, which reminded one somehow of Lincoln's top hat, puffed importantly. Lincoln reached out his long, bony hand and shook Grant's hand, warmly and for a long time. Then Lincoln shook the hands of all the other officers. It was 8:30 on the morning of March 29, 1865. It was at the little station at the foot of the bluff at City Point—perhaps siding would be a better word—where the military locomotive with a few cars for staff officers, and box cars for their mounts, stood ready to take the General to his last campaign of the Civil War. The troops had al-

¹"The Love Affairs of Lincoln: A Study of Suppressed Episodes." Horace Green, N. Y. *Times Magazine*, Mar. 12, 1922.

Grant's Last Stand

ready been put in motion the night before. It was ten days before the greatest and bravest defensive fighter that the modern world has known was to succumb to Northern numbers, backed by Grant's relentless will. It was a little more than two weeks before a handsome, maudlin, rum-crazed actor was to sneak into Ford's Theatre and send his leaden message to poor Father Abraham's brooding brain.

It was the beginning of the end.

Lincoln was entirely confident of the success of the war. At the same time he was unusually depressed, as if the antennæ of his being had picked from the air some mysterious message of the future. He seemed to speak through the shadow of coming events. He told a long and lugubrious story about himself as a young man, and about a stranger who, one moonlight night in Louisville, Kentucky, jumped out of a dark alley and held him up with a "bowie-knife as long as a scythe."² Better known is the premonition Lincoln mentioned in Cabinet meeting at Washington on that last morning of Good Friday, April 14. He said that the night before he had a dream about standing on the prow of a vessel which was carrying him forward toward a dark, mysterious shore. He said it probably meant that at that moment there was going on a battle in which Sherman would emerge victorious. He had had the same dream before. It was always followed by victory.

Meantime, before the cabin door at City Point, Grant "held his wife and kissed her many times, with unusual

²*Campaigning with Grant*, Horace Porter. Porter quotes Lincoln as saying the bowie-knife was about three feet long.

Two Men

tenderness even for him"; then went forward with the confidence of a man who knows that behind him there is undivided loyalty in the tents of home. From that time until the end he risked the same exposure as his men.

The little group of men walked slowly along the platform; and, as the train was about to start "we (officers) all raised our hats respectfully. The salute was returned by the President, and he said in a voice broken with feeling he could not hide: 'Good-bye, gentlemen. God bless you all! Remember, your success is my success.'"

The signal was given; the train steamed slowly forward on a campaign which was to carry the thick-set man with the reddish beard and the lieutenant-commander's straps on a long hard journey, into the White House; and, through its consequences, was to carry the lean man with the queer stovepipe hat, and the long arms that stretched beyond the sleeves of his frock coat, out of the White House, on an even longer journey, toward harbors undetermined.

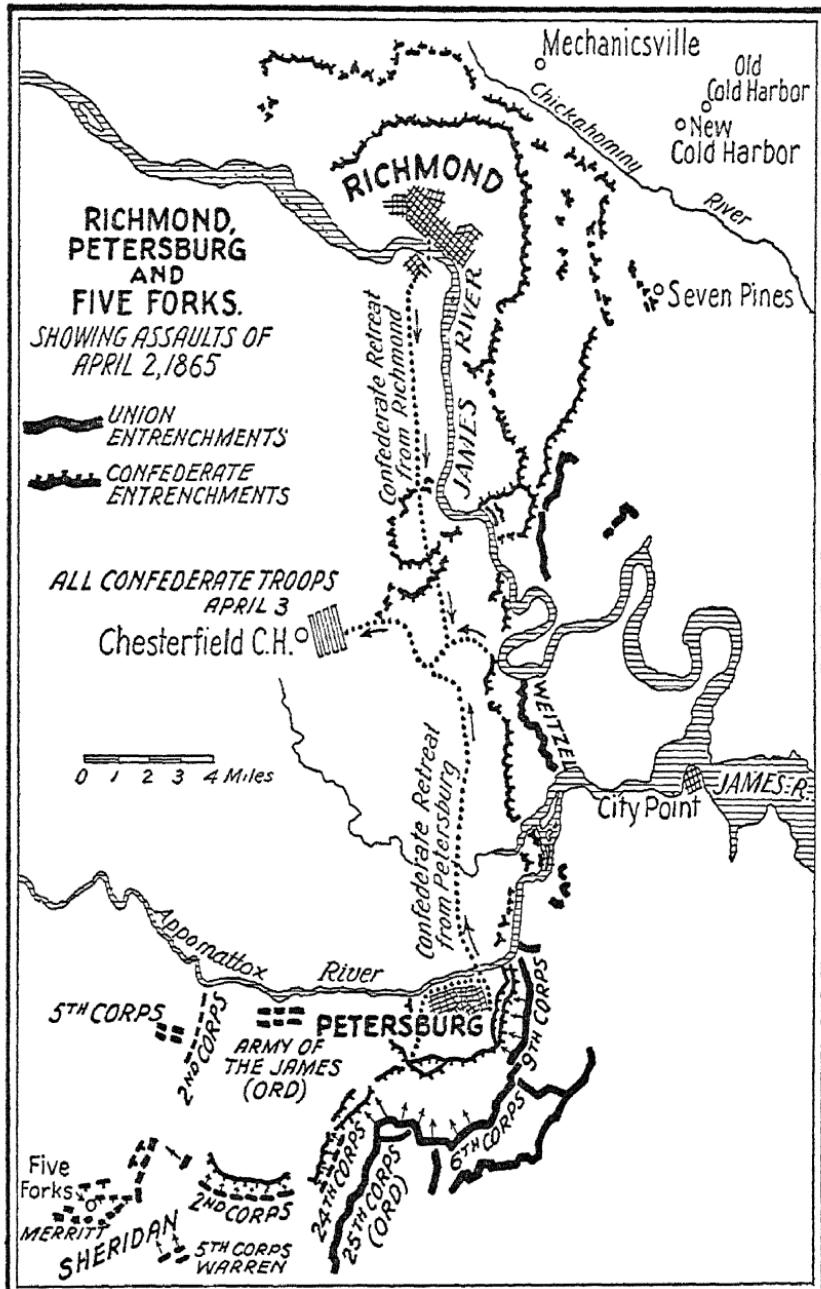
CHAPTER XXII

Five Forks

§ 1

AS THE train clucked along the tracks toward the end of the road where the staff officers (J. H. Wilson, Rawlins, who had returned from sick leave, Horace Porter, and others) were to mount their horses, Grant pondered the details of his plan. Grant's intention, as we have already stated in unmilitary language, was to squeeze Lee so tightly that he must either capitulate or make a dash for freedom. The more tightly the net was drawn, the more avenues of supply that were cut off, the more watchful Grant must be that Lee should not, with his shorter line of march, escape to the southwest. In this case not only would the war be prolonged indefinitely but Lee might easily join with Johnston and crush Sherman, who was marching north through the Carolinas. Then he could turn back upon Grant.

To clarify the welter of apparently conflicting events during the next few days it is necessary to glance at the map. If we had Grant's instant eye for topography it would be easier, and again it would be easier if we had his ability, in whatever exciting surroundings he found himself, to separate the important from the unimportant, the probable from the improbable, and to see each manœuvre in its relation to the whole. He was the composer of Northern symphony and the harmonizer of its battle



Adapted, with author's permission, from Ulysses S. Grant: The Great Soldier of America, by Robert R. McCormick

Grant's Last Stand

moods; not only composer, but leader of its orchestra of men. But he cared not whether the motif were carried by wood or brass or stringed instruments so long as the central theme swelled forward its triumphant climax.

It will be seen that generally speaking Petersburg and Richmond were north and west of the Union forces comprising the armies of the Potomac and the James. Grant's objective was neither Petersburg nor Richmond, but Lee's army. Provided Lee's army tried to escape—which it did—Grant did not intend to give chase or follow, but by forced marches on a converging route to intercept Lee along the road to Lynchburg. The latter lies west of Petersburg and southwest of Richmond. This idea of taking a shorter route to intercept, rather than a longer route to follow, was one that General Meade, who was ill during the last few days, could not seem to get into his head.

If, however, Lee did not attempt to escape, Grant was quite willing to hold him fast within the Petersburg-Richmond ring; while the other armies, notably Sherman's and Sheridan's cavalry corps, inflicted increasing damage on the rest of the Confederacy. In other words, Grant was willing to play the less dramatic rôle of "holding fast to the body" (Lincoln's phrase) while others chopped off the ankles, wrists, legs, and so on up to the torso. In the latter case Grant's waiting tactics were aided in that the enemy were losing through desertions as he wrote "at least a regiment a day, taking it throughout the entire army, by desertions alone." Referring to the new Southern law for conscripting boys from fourteen to eighteen, calling them junior reserves, and

Five Forks

men from forty-five to sixty, calling them senior reserves, General Butler coined the now common phrase that they were "robbing both the cradle and the grave."

While the armies were still eyeing one another before Petersburg, Sheridan and his 10,000 cavalrymen under Custer, of Indian fame, and Devan, had been galloping at will. Sheridan routed Early between Staunton and Charlottesville. Writes Grant of his favorite lieutenant:

Sheridan moved very light, carrying only four days' provisions with him, with a larger supply of coffee, salt and other small rations, and a very little else besides ammunition. They stopped at Charlottesville and commenced tearing up the railroad back toward Lynchburg. He also sent a division along the James River Canal to destroy locks, culverts, etc. All mills and factories along the lines of march of his troops were destroyed also.

Sheridan had in this way consumed so much time that his making a march to White House was now somewhat hazardous. He determined therefore to fight his way along the railroad and canal till he was as near to Richmond as it was possible to get, or until attacked. He did this, destroying the canal as far as Goochland, and the railroad to a point as near Richmond as he could get. On the 10th he was at Columbia. Negroes had joined his column to the number of 2000 or more, and they assisted considerably in the work of destroying the railroads and the canal. His cavalry was in as fine a condition as when he started, because he had been able to find plenty of forage. He had captured most of Early's horses and picked up a good many others on the road. When he reached Ashland he was assailed by the enemy in force. He resisted their assault with part of his command, moved quickly across the South and North Anna, going north, and reached White House safely on the 19th.

Grant's Last Stand

Sheridan had not gone on to Lynchburg as Grant had ordered because, Grant writes, "the rains had been so very heavy and the streams were so very much swollen." There was another and stronger reason why Sheridan did not try to capture Lynchburg and push south to join Sherman. *He did not want to.* Grant had two alternative plans we have noted, (a) holding Lee, while Sherman finished the war, or (b) forcing Lee out and then smashing him. Sheridan favored the latter. Not only favored the latter but insisted on it.

On March 22, 1865, Grant wrote to Sherman, who was then at Goldsboro, North Carolina:

Since Sheridan's very successful raid north of the James, the enemy are left dependent on the Southside and Danville roads for all their supplies. These I hope to cut next week. . . . His instructions will be to strike the Southside road as near Petersburg as he can, and destroy it so that it cannot be repaired for three or four days, and push on to the Danville road, as near to the Appomattox as he can get. . . . From that point I shall probably leave it to his discretion either to return to this army, crossing the Danville road south of Burkesville, or go and join you, passing between Danville and Greensboro. When this movement commences I shall move out by my left, with all the force I can, holding present intrenched lines. I shall start with no distinct view, further than holding Lee's forces from following Sheridan. But I shall be along myself, and will take advantage of anything that turns up. If Lee detaches, I will attack; or if he comes out of his lines I will endeavor to repulse him, and follow it up to the best advantage.

The above is specific as to Grant's state of mind because written at the time. Less to be depended upon be-

Five Forks

cause written a number of years after the event, but interesting for its language and probable truth is the statement by Sheridan's chief-of-staff, Forsythe, quoted in J. H. Wilson's *The Life of John Rawlins*. Forsythe is speaking:

After reading these [General Grant's February instructions telling Sheridan if possible to join Sherman] I said: "General, you are going to join Sherman?" He said: "No." I said: "How are you going to get out of it? This order is positive and explicit." He said: "I am not going to join Sherman." I said: "Why?" He said, in substance: "I'll tell you why; this campaign will end the war. I have been anxious for fear Lee would commence moving west before we could get to Grant's army. The Army of the Potomac will never move from its present position unless we join them and pull them out. The cavalry corps and the Army of the Potomac have got to whip Lee. If I obeyed these instructions and crossed the James and joined Sherman, the Army of the Potomac would rest where they are and Sherman, with our assistance, would close the war. If this should happen it would be disastrous to the country, for there would be no balance of power between the east and the west. This cavalry corps and the Army of the Potomac, of which it is a part, have got to wipe Lee out before Sherman and his army reach Virginia."

On March 26, Sheridan, leaving his troops where they were, came to City Point. Horace Porter says: "Rawlins, in his enthusiasm, seized both of Sheridan's hands in his own, wrung them vigorously, and then went to patting him on the back. Sheridan returned all the greetings warmly, and Rawlins now informed him that General Grant had made up his mind to send the cavalry through to join Sherman, destroying all communications

Grant's Last Stand

as they went. Sheridan looked greatly annoyed at this information.”¹

Inside the cabin the Commander-in-Chief showed Sheridan the written instructions to which Rawlins had referred. They directed him “to proceed with his cavalry around Lee’s right, and *then* (italics are authors) to move independently under other instructions.” They were subtle orders as will be seen; for when Sheridan, after arguing against them, rose to go “the General followed him out and had a few words of private conversation.”

Grant’s *Memoirs* describe the outcome vividly:

I saw that after Sheridan had read his instructions he seemed somewhat disappointed at the idea, possibly, of having to cut loose again from the Army of the Potomac, and place himself between the two main armies of the enemy. I said to him: “General, this portion of your instructions I have put in merely as a blind”; and gave him the reason for doing so, heretofore described. I told him that, as a matter of fact, I intended to close the war right here, with this movement, and that he should go no farther. His face at once brightened up, and slapping his hand on his leg he said: “I am glad to hear it, and we can do it.”

Sheridan was not however to make his movement against Five Forks until he got further instructions from me.

§ 2

Sheridan slapped his hand on his leg and said “we can do it.” Sheridan was hard and fit and flushed with recent victories. Sheridan’s men were tough from recent raids and poised for action. Sheridan was to be the spearhead;

¹Campaigning with Grant, Horace Porter.

Five Forks

and it was Sheridan's spark which determined Grant, in the face of staff misgivings about conditions of road and weather, to press the buttons on March 29, for the last grand movement of the Army of the Potomac.

Everywhere the artillery went it was necessary to build corduroy roads. In one day the main army had made sufficient progress to the southwest "to warrant me in starting Sheridan with his cavalry over by Dinwiddie with instructions to them to come up by the road leading northwest to Five Forks, thus menacing the right of Lee's line."² Grant wanted to get up ultimately to the all-important Danville railroad.

So Sheridan galloped off to join his command at Dinwiddie Court House. Divining Grant's plans promptly and correctly Lee sent against Sheridan five brigades of infantry under Pickett (of Gettysburg), also Fitzhugh Lee, commanding Rosser's and W. H. F. Lee's cavalry. Pushed back by a superior force, but not overwhelmed, Sheridan gave ground slowly without break in ranks. "The men behaved splendidly. I will hold out at Dinwiddie Court House until I am compelled to leave," Sheridan reported that night. On that midnight (March 31) Grant ordered Warren to move *at once*, get in touch with Sheridan and report to him. But Warren did not get all his troops under way until 5 A.M.

Warren's delay was of the essence, as lawyers say, since by virtue of Pickett's surge he found himself between Sheridan on one side and the 5th corps of the Union army on the other. If more troops could reach the left front in time Pickett could be virtually surrounded,

²*Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant.*

Grant's Last Stand

otherwise Sheridan must drop back for the night. Brave Pickett must stay on for ahead of him was Five Forks, the gateway for Lee's escape, and, as the name indicates, a strategic center of roads leading like spokes of a wheel in five directions.

Horace Porter rode back and forth acting as Grant's eyes and ears and spent most of the night of the 31st and of April 1 with Sheridan. According to Porter:

But the movement [Warren's] was slow, the required formation seemed to drag, and Sheridan, chafing with impatience and consumed with anxiety, became as restive as a racer struggling to make the start. He made every possible appeal for promptness. . . .

At four o'clock the formation was completed, the order for the assault was given, and the struggle for Pickett's intrenched line began. The Confederate infantry brigades were posted from the left to right as follows: Terry, Corse, Steuart, Ransom, and Wallace. General Fitzhugh Lee, commanding the cavalry, had placed W. H. F. Lee's two brigades on the right of the line, Munford's division on the left, and Rosser's in rear of Hatcher's Run, to guard the trains. I rode to the front, in company with Sheridan and Warren, with the head of Ayres's division, which was on the left. . . . He soon met with the fire from the edge of these woods, a number of men fell, and the skirmish-line halted and seemed to waver, Sheridan now began to exhibit those traits which always made him a tower of strength in the presence of an enemy. He put spurs to his horse, and dashed along in front of the line of battle from left to right, shouting words of encouragement, and having something cheery to say to every regiment. "Come on, men," he cried; "go at 'em with a will! Move on at a clean jump, or you'll not catch one of 'em. They're all getting ready to run now, and if you don't get

Five Forks

on to them in five minutes they'll every one get away from you! Now go for them!" Just then a man on the skirmish-line was struck in the neck; the blood spurted as if the jugular vein had been cut. "I'm killed!" he cried, and dropped to the ground. "You're not hurt a bit!" cried Sheridan. "Pick up your gun, man, and move right on to the front." Such was the electric effect of his words that the poor fellow snatched up his musket, and rushed forward a dozen paces before he fell, never to rise again. Sheridan was mounted on his favorite black horse, "Rienzi," which had carried him from Winchester to Cedar Creek, and which Buchanan Read made famous for all time by his poem of "Sheridan's Ride." . . . Soon Ayres's men met with a heavy fire on their left flank, and had to change directions by facing more toward the west. As the troops entered the woods . . . they were staggered by a heavy fire from the angle, and fell back in some confusion. Sheridan now rushed into the midst of the broken lines, and cried out: "Where is my battle-flag?" As the sergeant who carried it rode up, Sheridan seized the crimson-and-white standard, waved it above his head, cheered on the men, and made heroic efforts to close up the ranks. Bullets were now humming like a swarm of bees about our heads, and shells were crashing through the ranks. A musket-ball pierced the battle-flag; another killed the sergeant who had carried it; another wounded an aide, Captain McGonnigle, in the side; others struck two or three of the staff-officers' horses. All this time Sheridan was dashing from one point of the line to another, waving his flag, shaking his fist, encouraging, entreating, threatening, praying, swearing, the true personification of chivalry, the very incarnation of battle.

Sheridan spurred "Rienzi" up to the angle, and with a bound the animal carried his rider over the earthworks, and landed among a line of prisoners who had thrown down their arms and were crouching close under the breastworks. Some of them called out: "Wha' do you want us all to go to?" Then Sheridan's rage turned to humor, and he had a running talk with the "Johnnies" as they filed past. "Go right over there,"

Grant's Last Stand

he said to them, pointing to the rear. "Get right along, now. Oh, drop your guns; you'll never need them any more. You'll all be safe over there. Are there any more of you? We want every one of you fellows." Nearly 1500 were captured at the angle.

With news of the great victory of Five Forks, Horace Porter, a good reporter, that night plunged back to General Headquarters at Dabney's Mills, arriving ahead of his own courier. Grant, his cigar, his blue cavalry overcoat, his campfire and his staff—named in the order of their appearance—heard the news which Porter shouted from the saddle. Porter so far forgot himself as to pound his Chief's back. All except the laconic Ulysses, the latter already busy planning the next step, gave way to "boisterous demonstrations." General Adam Badeau³ wrote that Porter (who later became an LL.D.) "came up with so much enthusiasm, clapping the general-in-chief on the back, and otherwise demonstrating his joy, that the officer who shared his tent rebuked him at night for indulging too freely in drink at this critical juncture. But Porter had tasted neither wine nor spirits that day. He was only drunk with victory."

Grant decided on a general assault all along the line. He wrote several dispatches, including a cheerful note to Lincoln who was still waiting at City Point. At midnight the man from Galena was in his camp bed "sleeping as peacefully as if the next day was to be devoted to a picnic. Years later Grant remarked to my uncle and to Horace Porter how strange it was that he who used to be able to sleep under the most disagreeable circum-

³*Military History of Ulysses S. Grant.*

Five Forks

stances, now in a comfortable bed 'lay awake half the night.' ”

§ 3

In addition to his superstition against turning backward on any road or path General Grant had a dislike of exaggeration and a deep-rooted regard for accuracy which at times ran to extremes. The former characteristic left amusing stories in its wake, while the latter was the cause of his insomnia at the end of his life. According to Porter, he was known to say substantially the following: “I was told so and so about the wounded (possibly by Doctor Douglas) while we were talking this morning inside my tent.” Half an hour later Grant would return to the campfire and say, “I made a mistake, gentlemen. We were talking outside of my tent.”

One night during the City Point lull the Grant staff, which seems to have been a happy team, was swapping yarns when teacher Ulysses told this one about a man who had a great propensity for lying:⁴ “He seemed to believe that a lie told with particularity was more convincing than a general truth. . . . One day there were some strangers invited to dinner, and the champion was urged to try and keep as far within reasonable bounds in his statements as possible. . . . This he promised, and evidently in good faith; for he asked an officer to touch his foot under the table if he told anything that might to unimaginative persons appear to be an exaggeration. . . . A person at the table mentioned the existing tendency to build hotels larger and larger every year. The champion joined in the conversation by saying: ‘But it’s

⁴*Campaigning with Grant*, by Horace Porter.

Grant's Last Stand

not a new thing, after all. As long ago as when I was a mere boy, my father built a bigger hotel in our place than anybody has ever attempted since.' 'About how big was it?' asked one of the strangers. 'Why,' was the answer, 'it was 296 feet high, 580 feet long, and—' here the officer kicked his foot under the table, and he continued in a more subdued tone of voice—'and five feet and a half wide.' "

Turning from the jovial it was, as we have already suggested, this conscientious regard for accuracy which caused the dying general many sleepless nights during the months when he was working on the *Memoirs*. During those months, particularly in May, 1885, there are frequent references to sleeplessness in Doctor Douglas's diary.

May 3. "The night was not a good one; not that there was much pain, but a restlessness which deprived him of sleep, so that he had no good, continuous sleep till toward daylight. . . . At one time during the night . . . he requested to be furnished with paper and a pencil. They were brought to him reluctantly, and after writing for some time, he laid them aside of his own accord. . . . The activity of his brain under the renewal of work the last few days, is the probable cause of this insomnia, the result of 'cerebral exaltation.' "

The above appears on page 135 of the diary and opposite is written in Douglas's hand, "Since writing the above, I have learned that at this period the General was very much exercised by occurrences which greatly disturbed his mind, and that the writing in the night which I supposed to be due to the preparing of further notes

Five Forks

for his book was in relation to a *question of the authenticity* of the part already prepared. [Italics are Douglas's.] This was what he was engaged upon in the middle of the night when he called for paper and pencil, and his decision as to how to meet this question in fairness and truth being made, he dismissed the annoyance from his mind and yielded to sleep."

Taken in connection with other statements there is more in Douglas's words than is at first apparent. Here we have a picture of the emaciated warrior—his weight had dropped from 180 pounds to 145 pounds—in a struggle between accuracy on one side and a subordinate's reputation on the other. As Grant grew older it was increasingly hard for him to condemn, it was also hard for him to lie. Hence the sleepless nights.

From the diary, May 3, Sunday. "With this continued restlessness however, came some pain, and an increase in the fullness of the neck. It was suggested that the General should rest more and give over the preparations of the materials of his book, and the authentication of dates, to his son, the Colonel, and that for the present, or until he was stronger, he should not attempt the weaving of the narrative."

Another entry: "Unless the general conserves his strength he will be unable to finish the *Memoirs*. . . ."

CHAPTER XXIII

Surrender of Lee

§ 1

WHEN the living remnants of Pickett's battered men surrendered at Five Forks it meant that all but one major avenue of escape had been cut off from Lee and that he must evacuate Petersburg. Petersburg in turn meant Richmond, and with Richmond gone the only hope of the Confederacy was that Lee should escape by the Danville Road. Then he could, if all went well, join Johnston to crush Sherman marching north, and again, joined with Johnston, could either turn back upon the Army of the Potomac or lead Grant on a long chase, much as Washington played fox with the British in New Jersey.

Both Lee and Grant deduced each other's intentions correctly. The moment he heard of the result at Five Forks, while the rest were celebrating around the fire, Grant ordered a bombardment along the entire front in order to harry and delay Lee's withdrawal of troops from any part of the line. It was to start at dawn the following day. Vieing with one another in dash, Parke and Orde and Wright and Humphreys piled over the outer entrenchments and closed a large part of the circle around the city. On Sunday, May 2, Jefferson Davis, sitting in a church pew in Richmond, received a message from Lee. He left the city at once, followed by the

Surrender of Lee

others of the government. On the same day Grant, remembering that Lincoln was anxiously awaiting news at City Point, sent word to the President that he "might come out and pay us a visit tomorrow." Grant's dispatch that afternoon describes the situation.

Boyton Road, near Petersburg,
April 2, 1865 — 4.40 P.M.

Colonel T. S. Bowers,
City Point.

We are now up and have a continuous line of troops, and in a few hours will be intrenched from the Appomattox below Petersburg to the river above. . . . The whole captures since the army started out gunning will amount to not less than 12,000 men, and probably 50 pieces of artillery. I do not know the number of men and guns accurately however. . . . I think the President might come out and pay us a visit tomorrow.

U. S. GRANT,
Lieutenant-General.

Daylight of April 3 found the Army of the James streaming into Petersburg through the northern entrance while the parts of the Army of the Potomac swept in from another side, Meade and Grant in front. Trying to squeeze through two bridges at the outer end of the city were the massed rearguard of Lee's retreating forces, a target if there ever was one for Grant's artillery fire.¹ The soldier whom many thought of as ruthless, could not bear to give the order. "At all events," he writes, "I had not

¹At the capture of Antwerp in Belgium by the 9th German Army Corps under General von Boehn on October 9th, 1914, the retreat of the Belgian-English defenders was delayed by a single pontoon bridge crossing the River Scheldt. German planes could have inflicted a slaughter. I have never been able to decide whether they could not reach the spot in time, or deliberately avoided doing so. (See "*The Log of a Non-Combatant*" by Horace Green.)

Grant's Last Stand

the heart to turn the artillery upon such a mass of defeated and fleeing men, and I hoped to capture them soon."

"The President might pay us a visit," Grant had written; and the President did. Grant selected the piazza of a deserted house in deserted Petersburg where "there was not a soul to be seen, not even an animal in the streets" (only those who have been in a city between the fleeing of one army and the entry of another can know the eerie feeling of life suspended), and there sat down to wait the President's arrival. "About the first thing that Mr. Lincoln said to me after warm congratulations for the victory, and thanks both to myself and to the army which had accomplished it, was: 'Do you know, General, that I have had a sort of sneaking idea for some days that you intended to do something like this.' "

This was the last time with one exception that Lincoln and Grant talked privately. The day after Grant returned to Washington following the Appomattox surrender he repeated to the President the substance of a letter from Governor Smith of Virginia asking whether he (Smith) would be permitted to leave the country unmolested. Lincoln, believing that Grant was asking for instructions, answered in a parable which, as usual, took the shape of a quaint story. Lincoln said his position was like that of a certain popular Irishman out Springfield way, who unfortunately had let the drink habit get on top of him to the extent that his loyal friends decided to do something about it. Quoting Lincoln via Grant,

"These friends determined to make an effort to save him, and to do this they drew up a pledge to abstain from

Surrender of Lee

all alcoholic drinks. They asked Pat to join them in signing the pledge, and he consented. He had been so long out of the habit of using plain water as a beverage that he resorted to soda-water as a substitute. After a few days this began to grow distasteful to him. So holding the glass behind him, he said: ‘Doctor, couldn’t you drop a bit of brandy in that unbeknownst to myself?’ ”

Grant adds that had Lincoln lived, he would have allowed all Southerners to depart unmolested, and preferably “unbeknownst.”

§ 2

To the westward under cover of night Lee slipped out of Petersburg. But inevitable Sheridan stuck his fangs out ahead. Along the flanks darting in and out Sheridan’s victorious horsemen pressed them, while Meade’s infantrymen, with their leader so sick that he rode in an ambulance, followed as close as they were able. For Lee it is a race with death, a spectacle of pluck and daring which one gazes at with awful admiration. Even Grant can scarce forbear to cheer. The troops swagger forward tasting the wine of victory, four years in the brewing. On the night of April 3 Grant and Meade pitch camp at Sutherland’s Station; on April 4 and 5 the chase continues in high tempo, Grant riding along with General Ord’s columns. Lee in person has been at Amelia Court House, Sheridan has cut off his advance near Burkeville and captured six guns and many wagons. A scout called Campbell, in a Confederate uniform, dashes out of the woods and is nearly killed before he can prove his identity. He takes from his mouth a small pellet of tin foil,

Grant's Last Stand

in which is contained a still smaller sheet of tissue paper on which is written a message from Sheridan:

“. . . I wish you were here yourself.” Early that day Grant had already received another note from Sheridan, in which the latter says, “We can capture the Army of Northern Virginia if force enough can be thrown to this point, and then advance upon it.” Grant dismounts his black pony Jeff Davis and using the pony’s back for a desk writes a despatch to Ord, then calls for a fresh mount, Cincinnati, and with an escort of fourteen men starts at night through the woods to join Sheridan’s command. At half after ten they run into some of Sheridan’s pickets. In the moonlight some of the troops recognize the chief’s hunched figure. One of them says, “Boys, this means business”; another says, “The rebs are goin’ to get busted tomorrow, certain”; a third gets familiar with, “Uncle Sam’s joined the cavalry sure enough.”

During the night of April 5 Lee retreated from Amelia Court House and ordered rations to be sent to Farmville. Grant ordered Ord to cross over the Appomattox River at High Bridge. He ordered Sheridan to keep working around Lee’s left flank, and the Army of the Potomac to make another forced march. There was contact and skirmishing, there was the great fight at Sailor’s Creek² where Wright and Sheridan smashed everything, killing how many the records do not show exactly, and capturing 7000 men and 6 general officers. There was the engagement at Farmville where Union Colonel Theodore Read, who had got through ahead of the enemy, was cut off with a little force of 600 men,

²Sometimes called “Sayler’s Creek.”

Surrender of Lee

decided to give battle and did so until he and Colonel Francis Washburn were mortally hit and nearly every officer had been either killed or wounded. The deaths were far from vain for it held Lee fast at a vital point.

At this time, as Grant rode on April 7 along the struggling columns of men racing forward on foot, he was greeted with such remarks as, "We've marched nigh twenty miles on this stretch, and we're good for twenty more if the General says so"; or "We're not straddlin' any hosses, but we'll get there all the same." The men are gay and reckless, inflated with the serum of success. But now for the first time it is their leader who seems to bog. Is it the strain of riding day and night? —the wear and tear upon his practical, accurate mind of countless rapid-fire decisions and their instant execution, the knowledge of slaughter—or does his stubborn spirit, so near the goal of its achievement, drift out to share with noble Lee, the agony of his distress?

Grant's first note beseeches the end of waste.

Headquarters Armies of the U. S. A.,
5 P.M., April 7, 1865.

General R. E. Lee,
Commanding C. S. A.

The results of the last week must convince you of the hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the Army of Northern Virginia in this struggle. I feel that it is so, and regard it as my duty to shift from myself the responsibility of any further effusion of blood, by asking of you the surrender of that portion of the Confederate States army known as the Army of Northern Virginia.

U. S. GRANT,
Lieutenant-General.

Grant's Last Stand

In attempting to carry this message through the lines Seth Williams, adjutant-general, nearly lost his life. His orderly was shot. The answer reached Grant after midnight at Farmville, where he had waited, in a room almost destitute of furniture.

April 7, 1865.

General:

I have received your note of this day. Though not entertaining the opinion you express on the hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the Army of Northern Virginia, I reciprocate your desire to avoid useless effusion of blood, and therefore before considering your proposition, ask the terms you will offer on condition of its surrender.

R. E. LEE,
General.

Before leaving Farmville Grant dispatched the following reply stating "but one condition I would insist upon," and adding the thoughtful last sentence out of deference to Lee's possible desire not to be present in person.

April 8, 1865.

General R. E. Lee,
Commanding C. S. A.

Your note of last evening in reply to mine of same date, asking the condition on which I will accept the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia is just received. In reply I would say that, peace being my great desire, there is but one condition I would insist upon, namely: that the men and officers surrendered shall be disqualified for taking up arms against the Government of the United States until properly exchanged. I will meet you, or will designate officers to meet any officers you may

Surrender of Lee

name for the same purpose, at any point agreeable to you, for the purpose of arranging definitely the terms upon which the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia will be received.

U. S. GRANT,

Lieutenant-General.

Grant's *Memoirs* now reach the high-water mark of interest. There is the usual effort at accuracy added to an endeavor to sift the legend from the fact. Twice while relating the events of the ensuing forty-eight hours he permits himself a reference to personal feelings. He says, simply, "I was suffering very severely with a sick headache . . . [this was on the night of the 8th] I spent the night in bathing my feet in hot water and mustard . . . hoping to be cured by morning."

But Horace Porter takes us behind the scenes:

He was induced to bathe his feet in hot water and mustard, and apply mustard-plasters to his wrists and the back of his neck; but these remedies afforded little relief. The dwelling we occupied was a double house. The general threw himself upon a sofa in the sitting room on the left side of the hall, while the staff-officers bunked on the floor of the room opposite, to catch what sleep they could. About midnight we were aroused by Colonel Charles A. Whittier of Humphreys' staff, who brought the expected letter from Lee. Rawlins took it, and stepped across the hall to the door of General Grant's room. He hesitated to knock, not wishing to wake the commander if he were asleep, and opened the door softly and listened a moment to ascertain whether he could judge by any sound how the chief was resting. Soon the General's voice was heard saying: "Come in; I am awake. I am suffering too much to get any sleep." I had in the meantime brought a lighted candle, and now stepped into the room with it. The general, who had taken

Grant's Last Stand

off only his coat and boots, sat up on the sofa and read the communication.

Lee's reply was a suggestion to meet Grant but not with a view to surrender the Army of Northern Virginia.

Porter continues:

The general shook his head, expressive of his disappointment, and remarked, "It looks as if Lee still means to fight; I will reply in the morning"; and after making a few more comments, lay down again upon the sofa. Rawlins and I expressed the hope that the General might still be able to get some sleep, and then retired from the room. About four o'clock on the morning of April 9 I rose and crossed the hall to ascertain how the General was feeling. I found his room empty, and upon going out of the front door, saw him pacing up and down in the yard, holding both hands to his head. Upon inquiring how he felt, he replied that he had had very little sleep, and was still suffering the most excruciating pain. I said: "Well, there is one consolation in all this, General: I never knew you to be ill that you did not receive some good news before the day passed. I have become a little superstitious regarding these coincidences, and I should not be surprised if some good fortune were to overtake you before night." He smiled, and replied: "The best thing that could happen to me today would be to get rid of the pain I am suffering."

About 4:30 A.M. they took Grant on a walk over to General Meade's headquarters, where he was induced to drink some coffee, and after writing on the morning of April 9, 1865, one more note for Lee, asking him with all the inducements a mere soldier could offer not to waste another life, he mounted Cincinnati³ and rode for-

³An effort was made to have the General ride in the covered ambulance, but he refused.

Surrender of Lee

ward toward the south side of the Appomattox where on that morning the faintest buds of apple trees were seen to peep from limbs along the road.

Meantime Sheridan had sent Custer with his cavalry division galloping to the south of Appomattox Station to get west of Lee's supply trains. During the night of April 8 he blocked the roads and cut off four trains.

"The head of Lee's column," Grant writes, "came marching up there on the morning of the 9th, not dreaming, I suppose, that there were any Union soldiers near. The Confederates were surprised to find our cavalry had possession of the trains. However, they were desperate and at once assaulted, hoping to recover them. . . . So far, only our cavalry and the advance of Lee's army were engaged. Soon, however, Lee's men were brought up from the rear, no doubt expecting they had nothing to meet but our cavalry. But our infantry had pushed forward so rapidly that by the time the enemy got up they found Griffin's corps and the Army of the James confronting them. A sharp engagement ensued, but Lee quickly set up a white flag."

CHAPTER XXIV

Appomattox

§ 1

THE tired man riding forward on Cincinnati in the early morning of April 9 did not know these things. As a rule he had concentrated on his own plans with due regard, but not apprehension, for those of the enemy. But at the very moment when Lee's last avenue was blocked; when Lee saw in front not only the cavalry, but behind them gray lines of marching men of the 5th corps of the Potomac; when Lee was hemmed in so that every minute of continued action meant fruitless slaughter—at this moment Grant was still burdened with the thought "Lee still means to fight,"—and to his mind that meant that Lee still hoped to cut the cordon.

Grant could not proceed directly to Appomattox Court House without coming into the enemy lines. He had to swing around to take a road heading in the same direction from the south. He was jogging along the old wagon road between Farmville and Appomattox Court House when Lieutenant C. E. Pease dashed up from behind. Grant's hand went out for a message. It was 11:50 A.M. It was four years since Fort Sumter, and 344 days since Grant had crossed the Rapidan. "*When the officer reached me I was still suffering with the sick headache; but the instant I saw the contents of the note I was cured.*"¹

¹*Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant.* (Italics are the author's.)

Appomattox

What a different man from the iron man of history is revealed by that brief admission! Here is Lee's note:

April 9, 1865.

General:

I received your note of this morning on the picket line whither I had come to meet you and ascertain definitely what terms were embraced in your proposal of yesterday with reference to the surrender of this army. I now request an interview in accordance with the offer contained in your letter of yesterday for that purpose.

R. E. LEE,
General.

Lieutenant-General U. S. Grant,
Commanding U. S. Armies.

§ 2

Grant had left it to Lee to choose where the meeting was to take place, and it turned out to be the house of Major Wilmer McLean to which a curious history was attached. It was situated on the main, and at that time only, street of the little village of Appomattox Court House which is on rising ground flanked by undulating slopes.

Major McLean's first home had been on the land at Bull Run where the first battle of the war occurred. Thinking to remove to a safer spot he bought this property, over which again the waves of battle passed. Grant takes pains to explode the story of the famous apple tree. It appears that when Grant's messenger, Colonel Babcock, delivered Grant's answer to the above note he found Lee resting under an old apple tree in an orchard on the side of the hill occupied by the Confederate

Grant's Last Stand

forces. He was sitting upon an embankment "with his feet in the road below and his back resting against the tree." (For some time he had been stretched out on a blanket.) The story of the famous apple tree, writes Grant, "had no other foundation than that. Like many other stories it would be very good if it was only true."

Far ahead of Grant, Lee, accompanied only by Grant's messenger, Colonel Babcock, and by Marshall and his orderly, Tucker, now started for the final rendezvous, mounted as usual on Traveller. Consider that ride through the eyes of Lee's greatest historian:²

How often he had ridden that strong steed and in scenes how various! Up Malvern Hill, when the very earth seemed alive with the crawling wounded; over Thoroughfare Gap while "Stonewall's" guns were growling, and after the spinning wheels of the pursuing guns at Second Manassas; across South Mountain; among the bloody ridges of the Antietam; with the mists enveloping him at Fredericksburg; confident and calm when the cheering thousands acclaimed him in the woods of Chancellorsville; out on the hill at Gettysburg; along the mournful byways of the Wilderness; down the telegraph road toward Cold Harbor; over the James and over that same Appomattox, sullen and tawny, at Petersburg. Jackson had ridden with him, the battle light in his eyes, the laughing Stuart, the nervous Hill, the diligent Pender, the gallant Rodes—all of them dead now, and he alone, save for those silent companions, was on his last ride as commander of the Army of Northern Virginia.

For a solemn half an hour Lee waited in the sitting-room at the left of the wide verandah of the McLean

²*R. E. Lee*, by D. S. Freeman, Vol. IV.

Appomattox

home, whose six white posts are separated by seven wide steps in the center.

Presently the clatter of hoofs resounded and another horse leading another cavalcade lowered its head to crop the grass not far from Traveller. A man not quite forty-three years of age, somewhat stoop-shouldered, with a nut-brown beard and hair of slightly darker shade entered the room. He wore no sword or sash or spurs; his boots and uniform were mud-bespattered, and nothing beyond the shoulder straps on his common soldier's blouse bespoke his rank. There rose slowly to meet him an erect, dignified man, five inches taller, and nearly sixty years of age, whose hair and beard were silver gray. The taller man wore an immaculate uniform of Confederate gray, new boots, a splendid sword and sash, and buckskin gauntlets, all of which seemed, somehow, to reflect his personality.

"I met you once before, General Lee, while we were serving in Mexico . . . and I think I should have recognized you anywhere," General Grant began. Lee acknowledged quietly that that was the case, but added that he could not recall a single feature.³ Led by Grant, the conversation for a short time wandered into Mexican channels, the victor unable, perhaps, to come to the point. Twice, according to Grant's *Memoirs*, once, according to others within hearing, Lee reverted to the subject at hand. Lee finally said, "I suppose, General Grant, that the object of our present meeting is fully understood. I asked to see you to ascertain upon what

³Grant himself, however, states that Lee, "remarked that he remembered me very well in the old army."

Grant's Last Stand

terms you would receive the surrender of my army.” Without a change of voice Grant replied: “The terms I propose are those stated substantially in my letter of yesterday.” Lee nodded an assent and said: “Those are about the conditions which I expected would be proposed.” (In reality it was a great relief to Lee; he had been apprehensive that because of his refusal to meet them at the time offered the terms would be stiffened.) At this point must have occurred the second general conversation to which Grant refers. But Lee, suffering to get the business ended, suggested that the terms be put in writing. At this moment there were present in the room Lee and Marshall; Grant, Sheridan, Custer, Parker, Babcock, Ingalls, Merritt and Porter. Grant called for his manifold order book and wrote rapidly in pencil⁴ until he came to the sentence stating how the arms and public property were to be stacked. Grant paused, reflected and then according to Horace Porter “he looked toward Lee, and his eyes seemed to be resting on a handsome sword that hung at that officer’s side. He said afterward that this set him to thinking that it would be an unnecessary humiliation to require the officers to surrender their swords, and a great hardship to deprive them of their personal baggage and horses; and after a short pause he

⁴In his splendid fourth volume of “*R. E. Lee*,” by Douglas Southall Freeman, Mr. Freeman says that “Lee sat in silence . . . as Grant called for his manifold order-book, opened it, *lit his pipe*, puffed furiously,” etc. I had never heard of Grant’s smoking a pipe at the surrender, and questioned Mr. Freeman. The latter replied to the effect that he believed his statement correct, but that at the time of writing he did not have his sources of information. Questioned on the point Colonel U. S. Grant 3rd stated to the writer that he did not believe his grandfather “lit a pipe.” Asked why, Colonel Grant said that the General was meticulous as to the feelings of others; that he might have considered a pipe discourteous to Lee. (Italics are authors.)

Appomattox

wrote the sentence: 'This will not embrace the side-arms of the officers, nor their private horses or baggage.' "⁵ The celebrated incident of Lee's handing over his jewel-hilted sword, which was not, by the way, the sword he had with him, and Grant handing it back is, of course, pure tosh.

General Lee pushed aside some objects on the table, carefully wiped and adjusted his spectacles and read the following:

Appomattox C. H., Va.,
Apr. 9th, 1865.

Gen. R. E. Lee,
Comd'g C. S. A.

Gen.: In accordance with the substance of my letter to you of the 8th inst., I propose to receive the surrender of the Army of N. Va. on the following terms, to wit: Rolls of all the officers and men to be made in duplicate. One copy to be given to an officer designated by me, the other to be retained by such officer or officers as you may designate. The officers to give their individual paroles not to take up arms against the Government of the United States until properly exchanged, and each company or regimental commander sign a like parole for the men of their commands. The arms, artillery, and public property to be parked and stacked, and turned over to the officer appointed by me to receive them. This will not embrace the side-arms of the officers, nor their private horses or baggage. This done, each officer and man will be allowed to return to their homes, not to be disturbed by United States authorities so long as they observe their paroles and the laws in force where they may reside.

Very respectfully,

U. S. GRANT,
Lt.-Gen.

⁵*Campaigning with Grant*, by Horace Porter.

Grant's Last Stand

When General Lee came to the end and read the sentence, "This will not embrace the side-arms of the officers, nor their private horses or baggage," he looked across the six feet separating his table from that of Grant's and said with a slight change of expression and a degree of warmth, "This will have a very happy effect upon my army."

Before the terms were copied Lee hesitated and finally said:

"There is one thing I should like to mention. The cavalry-men and artillerists own their own horses in our army. Its organization in this respect differs from that of the United States. I should like to understand whether these men will be permitted to retain their horses."

"You will find that the terms as written do not allow this," General Grant replied; "only the officers are permitted to take their private property."

Lee read over the second page of the letter again, and then said: "No, I see the terms do not allow it; that is clear." His face showed plainly that he was quite anxious to have this concession made; and Grant said very promptly, and without giving Lee time to make a direct request:

"Well the subject is quite new to me. Of course I did not know that any private soldiers owned their animals; but I think we have fought the last battle of the war, I sincerely hope so—and that the surrender of this army will be followed soon by that of all the others; and I take it that most of the men in the ranks are small farmers, and as the country has been so raided by the two armies, it is doubtful whether they will be able to put in a crop to carry themselves and their families through the next winter without the aid of the horses they are now riding, and I will arrange it in this way: I will not change the terms as now written, but I will instruct the officers I shall appoint to receive the paroles to let all the men who claim to own a horse

Appomattox

or mule take the animals home with them to work their little farms.”⁶

Lee now looked greatly relieved, and though anything but a demonstrative man, he gave every evidence of his appreciation of this concession, and said: “This will have the best possible effect upon the men. It will be very gratifying, and will do much toward conciliating our people.”

Marshall wrote a note of acceptance of these terms, from which Lee removed the flowing phrases. While the terms were being copied the Federal officers present were presented to Lee who shook hands, perfunctorily with all except one previous acquaintance, but stopped for a moment and scrutinized Colonel Parker “with evident surprise”—apparently believing that this full-blooded Indian was a Negro. Grant explained by way of apology why he was without his sword. Lee mentioned that his men had lived upon parched corn for several days upon which Grant at once promised rations for 25,000 men. Further details were arranged. It was now approaching 4:30 o’clock.

§ 3

When this thing had been done, which Lee said would be more painful to him than dying a thousand deaths, and when the details of its aftermath had been arranged, General Lee bowed to those present and walked slowly from the room and across the porch. In front of the McLean house a row of trees flanks the lawn, and beyond

⁶The entire quotation is from “*Campaigning with Grant*,” by Horace Porter who adds this expression, has been quoted in various forms, and has been the subject of some dispute. I give the exact words used.

Grant's Last Stand

the road in either direction may be seen a vista of sloping fields. Lee paused on the steps. For some moments he gazed in the direction of his troops on the hillside⁷ and absent-mindedly smote his gloved right fist against the palm of his left hand. His horse was brought. It is written that with his own hand he smoothed Traveller's forelock, tucked it into the bridle and, with an audible sigh, lifted himself to the saddle.⁸

At that moment Grant appeared, stopped abruptly and, as if by instinct raised his hat. The other Federal officers followed their leader's tribute.

Looking neither to the right nor to the left, Lee rode off to another duty which wrenches his soul—to tell the devoted remnants of his army that for four gruelling years they had struggled along a road which ended blindly, and through a torture that was vain.

⁷Porter's account is the most particular.

⁸Douglas S. Freeman, who quotes General Forsythe.

PART THREE

CHAPTER XXV

Grant's Would-Be Assassinator

§ 1

THE soil of Virginia is enriched by the blood of more young Americans than lie in any territory of equal size on earth. Spring is spring everywhere. Yet one cannot visit the Civil War battlefields of Virginia at the exact time of year when Grant and Lee were locked in the final test, without benefit of certain fancies:

In Virginia, there is a time when the cocoa-colored waters of the Appomattox and the James and the Rappahannock rivers are receding to their natural level; when the meadow lark speaks most gaily, and the bob-white's occasional reveille shows that he is safe from hound and gun; when the season of spring freshets is past, and the season of thunderstorms is yet to come; when the roads are again ready for the horseman, and the corn and wheat for planting. At this season, when the forsythia is so yellow that it seems to fairly blaze; when abundant apple blossoms cluster every view and the less abundant pink of dogwood startles the eye and heart into a kind of joyful pain — when inanimate doorways seem to settle even more comfortably than usual into the earth, while the animate earth itself is unsettled, fresh and seething with desire for rebirth; — in short, during the early days of April — when those young men were put to, and endured, their last lash of the Civil War — at this exact

Grant's Last Stand

time during the spring of each year does the Virginia countryside commemorate its dead with a service of perpetual loveliness, and a blanket of beauty peculiarly its own.

§ 2

From these scenes and from the place of his surrender, Lee rode quietly northeastward toward Richmond. He had his black, bitter moods when no one dared approach; he had momentary relief from tension as at the time when some soldier gripped his hand and exploded, "I wish for your sake and mine that every damned Yankee on earth was sunk ten miles in hell!"; over and again he faced crowds who pressed close for the sake of speaking to, or even touching him, moments when some sudden tentacle of sympathy caused the release of unmolested tears, long held in chain.¹ But first were duties to be performed, such as on the rainy April 10 when he received Grant again on a knoll between the lines, the latter attempting to persuade a course of influential action which Lee felt to be without his own province. There was also the farewell proclamation to the army.

From these scenes and from the place of his victory Grant went just as quietly back to City Point.

By April 13 his work was pretty well cleaned up, and when invited verbally by the President to accompany him and Mrs. Lincoln to Ford's Theatre on the night of Friday, April 14, Grant said that he hoped to be able to get away on the afternoon train to Burlington, N. J., where his two older boys and Nellie, who later became Mrs. Sartoris, were at school.

¹See, of course, D. S. Freeman, who quotes Blackford and others.

Grant's Would-Be Assassinator

There has always been considerable mystery as to Grant's place in the scheme of the assassins, but never before, or since, has a more extraordinary explanation been given than that told by Jesse Root Grant,² the youngest son, who was present at the family luncheon at the Hotel Willard and on the train to Burlington later that afternoon. If there is any better example of the truth-stranger-than-fiction adage it is yet to be found, nor is there a better example of the many events in Grant's career which made him a fatalist. Here is Jesse's account, just as he gives it, with some words omitted:

But I remember that mother and I were at dinner when father came in and joined us.

"I am afraid I shall be unable to leave Washington tonight," he said, as he seated himself.

I was bitterly disappointed. And my disappointment was augmented by father's further explanation that he had, conditionally, accepted the President's invitation for mother and himself to accompany the presidential party to the theater that evening.

Mother objected to this arrangement. She was anxious to rejoin the other children in Burlington. They were expecting us. In addition to this, she was worried by the sudden and inexplicable loss of appetite displayed by me. I had made no complaint, but mother was fearful that I was, or was about to become, ill.

Then a lady who had been dining at an adjoining table came to us, smiling.

"Do not be disturbed about your small boy's apparent loss of appetite, Mrs. Grant. He came in before you, and consumed two orders of hard-boiled eggs and ice-cream."

This information relieved mother's immediate anxiety about me, but in no degree affected her determination to proceed to

²*In the Days of My Father: General Grant*, by Jesse Root Grant.

Grant's Last Stand

Burlington that night. Her trunks were packed, the other children were waiting for her. So father bade us good-bye, promising to follow us to Burlington on the morrow.

Two men at a near-by table who had been watching us so intently as to attract our attention at once left the room.

I remember clearly the drive down Pennsylvania Avenue to the depot, the iron-tired wheels of our carriage rattling and bumping over the cobblestones. It was in the early evening, but the Avenue was deserted and quiet as midnight.

We were nearing the railway station when a man on horseback overtook us, drew alongside, and, leaning down, peered into our carriage. Then he wheeled his horse and rode furiously away.

To our surprise and joy, father came into the car just as the train drew out of the station. He was carrying a great bundle of papers, and after but a brief word of greeting he moved to a seat at the front end of the car and became at once engrossed in his documents.

It was an ordinary day coach of that period and the lamp at the forward end of the car happened to be burning brightest. Sitting where he did, father was hidden from one peering through the door from the front platform. This probably saved his life.

At Baltimore our car was detached from the train and drawn through the city by horses. At the other side of town a fresh engine was waiting, and we proceeded northward, running as a special. No stop was made until we reached Philadelphia.

At Philadelphia a crowd of excited people surged about our car. Father opened the door and found a belligerent brakeman guarding the steps from an agitated deputation of state, city, and railway officials. The brakeman was declaring loudly that his orders were to admit no one, that he had thrown a man off at the Relay House, and he didn't care who they were, they couldn't come in.

Father brought them in and we received the tragic news of President Lincoln's assassination.

Grant's Would-Be Assassinator

From the tone and temper of his book, I am inclined to believe every word of Jesse Root Grant's account, nor do his deductions appear to be too far-fetched. Jesse was then at the age when physical impressions leave a photographic outline. The extraordinary part of fate's caprice, if you wish to put it on no other grounds, is that the future president's life was undoubtedly saved by a double change of plans. First, the conspirator was thrown off the track by Mrs. Grant's insistence on going to Burlington and by Grant's statement at table that he could not get away. Again he was thrown off the track by Grant's last-moment change of plans and the decision to board the train "carrying a large bundle of papers." Once more Grant's life was probably saved by taking a vacant seat at the front end of the car "where he was hidden from one" peering through the door from the front platform. Then there is the brakeman's feat in throwing a man off at the Relay House.

"Many years later," Jesse tells us,

"Mother received an unsigned letter in which the writer expressed his deep thankfulness that he had failed in the mission assigned to him. The unknown writer went on to say that he had sat near to us that evening in the Willard Hotel, that he had examined our carriage as we drove to the station, that he had peered through the door of our cars as the train drew out, and that, while certain Father had not left his office, he would have entered the car if a brakeman had not opposed him. Convinced that the man he sought was still in Washington, he made no great effort to overcome the brakeman. And then, at the Relay House, he had fallen from the train and broken his leg."

CHAPTER XXVI

“The Sight Was Varied and Grand”

—*Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*

§ 1

THE assassination of Lincoln, whose general attitude toward the rebellious States was shared by Grant, and whose political skill was far greater, excited untold consequences upon the future of the country. Mad man though Booth was, the murder caused a tidal wave of revenge. Although the wave subsided with calmer judgment, the shore line was never quite the same again. What might have been the effect of the Emancipator's restraining hand had he lived to influence the course of Reconstruction, no one would venture to say. Wounds which might have healed without malice were left to fester for generations. Reconstruction was bungled as badly as the Versailles Treaty. The course of years proved one more example of the fact that victorious peace is harder to achieve than victorious war. The accession of Andrew Johnson was another example of the folly of electing a vice-president on entirely politico-geographical, rather than on personal, qualifications. Johnson was reported to have been under the influence of liquor on the occasion of his inaugural, and also during the critical hours between Lincoln's removal from

"The Sight Was Varied and Grand"

Ford's Theatre and Stanton's announcement, "Now he is with the ages."¹

Johnson clashed openly twice with Grant. On the first occasion the issue was so clear cut and Grant so obviously right that there was no doubt as to the outcome. A Norfolk, Virginia, grand jury found indictments for treason against a number of Confederates, who had been properly paroled under the terms of the Appomattox surrender. General Lee, hearing that he would probably receive similar treatment, wrote to Grant requesting amnesty and pardon. Not only did Grant forward this request through channels to the new President stating emphatically that under the terms of the surrender none of the officers and men paroled at Appomattox could be tried for treason so long as the paroles were observed, but he backed up the opinion by a personal call at the White House.

Grant said to Johnson: "A general commanding troops has certain responsibilities and duties and power which are supreme. . . . I have made certain terms with Lee, the best and only terms. If I had told him and his army that their liberty would be invaded, that they would be open to arrest, trial, and execution for treason, Lee would never have surrendered, and we should have lost many lives in destroying them. . . . *I will resign the command of the army rather than execute any order directing me to arrest Lee or any of his commanders so long as they obey the laws.*"

President Johnson, who did not dare pit his popularity

¹Both Lincoln and Grant died between 7 and 8 o'clock in the morning. Grant at one minute before 8 o'clock.

Grant's Last Stand

against that of Grant, withdrew the indictments, without, however, granting amnesty. Johnson's adamant outlook is further revealed in an interview between himself and General Longstreet in November, 1865. Relying upon a letter of introduction from Grant, who had been his friend at West Point, the Southern soldier called at the White House in search of a pardon. According to Longstreet's reminiscence:²

The President was nervous, ill at ease, and somewhat resentful . . . and at length closed the interview by saying, "There are three men this Union will never forgive—they have given it too much trouble. They are Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and James Longstreet." General Longstreet said, "Those who are forgiven much, love much, Mr. President." Johnson answered, "You have high authority for that statement, General, but you cannot have amnesty."

Grant had two more serious conflicts with Johnson which belong rather to the political than to the military aspect of his career.

Prior to these Grant had other business which came within the scope of his *Memoirs*. Joseph E. Johnston had surrendered to Sherman; but the terms made by Sherman went far beyond the surrender of an army. They virtually amounted to a treaty of peace and a guarantee of political privileges to Southern States. Whether right or wrong, such terms were obviously not within the sphere of a mere general to give. They were in line with certain sentiments expressed by Lincoln, sentiments which Lincoln would have wished to put into practical effect. Sherman had taken the precaution of stating that

²*Lee and Longstreet at High Tide*, quoted by Coolidge.

"The Sight Was Varied and Grand"

the terms were conditional upon acceptance by Washington, which, in the revulsion of feeling caused by Lincoln's assassination, they most emphatically were not. Both the President and Secretary of War Stanton denounced Sherman openly and bitterly, some loose-tongued individuals going so far as to call him a traitor. Stanton was particularly outspoken. Grant was dispatched to Raleigh to cancel the terms, supersede Sherman and recommence hostilities. According to the *Diary of Gideon Welles*, Grant, however, was "tender to sensitiveness" of his friend's feelings and acted with the consummate tact which was his in situations where he knew his ground. He put the facts before Sherman, allowed the latter to reverse the terms as if of his own initiative, and set terms similar to those of Appomattox. Not only that, but he slipped away from Raleigh with practically no one beyond Sherman to know of his coming or going. Stanton, Sherman never forgave. Sherman waited for his chance to pay off. As the world knows he got that chance at Washington when, on the day of the grand review of the Northern armies, and on the grand-stand where the multitude was witness, he refused to shake hands with the man who had offended him. (See, however, an interesting footnote.³)

³I have given the generally accepted version. But Charles A. Dana, then Assistant Secretary of War and later an accurate newspaper man, reports: "I was, of course, curious to see what General Sherman would do in passing before Mr. Stanton to take his place on the stand. The General says in his *Memoirs* that, as he passed, Stanton offered his hand and he refused to take it. He is entirely mistaken. I was watching narrowly. The Secretary made no motion to offer his hand, or to exchange salutations in any manner. As the general passed, Mr. Stanton gave him merely a slight forward motion of his head, equivalent, perhaps, to a quarter of a bow."

Grant's Last Stand

§ 2

On May 23 was held the grand review of Sherman's army and of Meade's Army of the Potomac. Lacking an ear for musical cadence, generally supposed to be indifferent to the rhythm and sway of marching men, Grant was nevertheless mutely impressed by the pageant of human material through which he had expressed his will. Brass bands and buttons, pomp and oratory he disliked; he mentions his distaste for Napoleon, and were he living today would presumably feel the same toward Napoleon's counterpart in the Mediterranean. Yet one senses an emotion on various occasions when Grant saw armies on the move. One feels it that day in 1863 when he stood with Sherman on top of Haines's Bluff and looked forward toward Vicksburg which was soon to be his, and backward toward the men who were to make it so; one senses it when he stood with Thomas on Missionary Ridge at Chattanooga and saw, through shifting clouds below, the timing and welding of co-ordinate patterns of men accomplishing the scheme of his exact imagination; one feels it when at dead of night he picked his way through the sleeping troops who had withstood the gruelling Battle of the Wilderness. One feels it in greater measure when he stood on the bluff near Wilcox's Landing high above the James River, hands clasped behind back, and watched the infantry, with 4000 cavalry, and 3500 head of cattle, and trains of wagons and artillery "35 miles long" being ferried across the stream that separated him from Petersburg and from the object of his grip.

"The Sight Was Varied and Grand"

Perhaps those marches spoke to him the music of things accomplished. However that may be, one of the last pages of his manuscript, pencilled when he sat either on the porch or in the bedroom of the Drexel Cottage at Mt. McGregor, tells of the Grand Review of the entire army at Washington; when for two entire days the victorious soldiers, from every part of the country, trudged down Pennsylvania Avenue, past the White House of their still United States. Grant remarks, with a degree of satisfaction, that "the sight was varied and grand."

Meade's army [Grant wrote in the *Memoirs*] occupied over six hours of the first day in passing the grand stand which had been erected in front of the President's house. Sherman witnessed this review from the grandstand which was occupied by the President and his cabinet. Here he showed his resentment for the cruel and harsh treatment that had unnecessarily been inflicted upon him by the Secretary of War, by refusing to take his extended hand. (See footnote p. 233.)

Sherman's troops had been in camp on the south side of the Potomac. During the night of the 23d he crossed over and bivouacked not far from the Capital. Promptly at ten o'clock on the morning of the 24th, his troops commenced to pass in review. Sherman's army made a different appearance than that of the Army of the Potomac. The latter had been operating where they received, directly from the North, full supplies of food and clothing regularly: the review of this army therefore was the review of a body of 65,000 well-drilled, well-disciplined and orderly soldiers inured to hardship and fit for any duty, but without the experience of gathering their own food and supplies in an enemy's country, and of being ever on the watch.

Sherman's army was not so well-dressed as the Army of the Potomac, but their marching could not be excelled; they gave

Grant's Last Stand

the appearance of men who had been thoroughly drilled to endure hardships, either by long and continuous marches or through exposure to any climate, without the ordinary shelter of a camp. They exhibited also some of the order of march through Georgia where the "sweet potatoes sprung up from the ground" as Sherman's army went marching through. In the rear of the company there would be a captured horse or mule loaded with small cooking utensils, captured chickens and other food picked up for the use of the men. Negro families who had followed the army would sometimes come along in the rear of a company, with three or four children packed upon a single mule, and the mother leading it.

The sight was varied and grand: nearly all day for two successive days, from the Capitol to the Treasury Building, could be seen a mass of orderly soldiers marching in columns of companies. The national flag was flying from almost every house and store; the windows were filled with spectators; the doorsteps and sidewalks were crowded with colored people and poor whites who did not succeed in securing better quarters from which to get a view of the grand armies. The city was about as full of strangers who had come to see the sights as it usually is on inauguration day when a new President takes his seat.

It was, perhaps, though one cannot say for certain, the day after Grant wrote the above description of the Grand Review that he scribbled to Doctor Douglas:⁴

I feel much relieved this morning. I had begun to feel that the work of getting my book together was making but slow progress. I find it about completed, and the work now to be done is mostly after it gets back in gallies [spelling is the General's]. It can be sent to the printer faster than he sends for

⁴The note is undated, but in an envelope with other slips dated June 28, 1885. He had still to write his estimate of Lincoln and other Cabinet members and to correct galley proofs. He died a little more than three weeks later.

“The Sight Was Varied and Grand”

it. There [are] from one hundred and fifty to two hundred pages more of it than I had intended. Will not cut out anything of interest. It is possible we may find a little repetition. The whole of that is not likely to amount to many pages. There is more likelihood of omission.

CHAPTER XXVII

A Question of Veracity

§ 1

FOR God's sake and for your country's sake, come out of Washington!"

So Sherman had written to his friend Grant when the latter was made the head of all the armies. At that time, since Grant's duty was to conduct the war and the place to conduct it was in the field, a decision to follow his own inclination was not difficult. Now, however, the path lay along tortuous rivers of policy and intrigue, to which his technique of action was entirely unsuited.

With Grant's activities during the years of President Johnson's single term and with his own two terms in the White House this book is slightly concerned. It was not the memory of these things which passed through the soldier's mind while writing the *Memoirs*. The latter go only a few pages beyond the description of the military pageant which preceded the mustering out of his armies. For our purpose it is necessary to give the merest outline of the political interim. We shall see him again eight years later when he steps out of the Presidential setting, having been subjected in the meantime to greater praise and greater scorn than is usual even for those who occupy this exalted target.

A Question of Veracity

So much as three years before Grant took office he encountered astounding differences of opinion, even in the North. At one extreme were those who in their attitude toward the Southern States agreed with the substance of Lincoln's last public statement, which took up the question of whether the States which had seceded were constitutionally within or without the Union.

"As it appears to me," Lincoln had said to a crowd gathered at the White House three days before his assassination, "that question has not been nor yet is a practically material one, and that any discussion of it while it thus remains practically immaterial could have no effect other than the mischievous one of dividing our friends. As yet, whatever it may hereafter become, that question is bad as a basis of a controversy, and good for nothing at all—a mere pernicious abstraction. We all agree that the seceded States, so-called, are out of their proper practical relation with the Union and that the sole object of the Government, civil and military, in regard to those States is to again get them into that proper practical relation. I believe that it is not only possible, but in fact easier, to do this without deciding or even considering whether these States have ever been out of the Union, than with it. Finding themselves at home, it would be utterly immaterial whether they had ever been abroad."

At the other extreme of opinion were men of President Andrew Johnson's type who felt, as he stated unequivocally, "I hold that robbery is a crime; rape is a crime; treason is a crime; and crime must be punished. Treason must be made infamous and must be punished, and traitors must be impoverished."

Grant's Last Stand

Thrust into an atmosphere of pettiness, unused to that theory of achievement which held that politics was the art of using mean personal motives for the good of large groups, Grant's straightforward nature suffered a long baptism of uncertainty. But always more of a doer than a criticizer, never one to hesitate on the brink, to "drink tea and take advice" as John Keats put it, Grant, so soon as it became apparent that the people would not let him remain quietly upon the bank, plunged boldly, and as usual silently, into the political maelstrom.

Grant's first act after his election was typical. He retired to Galena, wrote a letter of acceptance which was noteworthy for good sense and brevity. At the end the short sentence, "Let Us Have Peace," struck precisely the note desired by a war-sick nation. Then he selected a cabinet without asking advice of any one, and wrote entirely himself his brief inaugural which no one, not even his anxious wife, saw until the hour of its delivery.¹ It was obvious that Grant's intention was to be a president of the people, not of a party nor of party politicians. Grant's inaugural speech was terse. Yet in spite of the self-satisfied tone which some critics profess to have detected, in spite of the "platitudes" which other critics mention, it is curious that the 1200 words contain "sentences which stuck in the mind and some of which have become imbedded in our speech."²

"The responsibilities of the position I feel, but accept them without fear. The office has come to me unsought;

¹A few days before the inaugural Adam Badeau came to Grant offering a speech which he had composed. Grant did not look at it. He told Badeau to lock it up till after March 4.

²Louis A. Coolidge: *The Life of Ulysses S. Grant*.

A Question of Veracity

I commence its duties untrammeled." "All laws will be faithfully executed, whether they meet my approval or not. I shall on all subjects have a policy to recommend, but none to enforce against the will of the people. Laws are to govern all alike—those opposed as well as those who favor them. I know no method to repeal bad or obnoxious laws so effective as their stringent execution."

§ 2

In any balanced analysis of Grant's two terms as President, it is necessary to assess personal factors as well as factors inherent in the postwar era. In retrospect one must distinguish between things accomplished and method of accomplishment. Although from a political point of view method of accomplishment is of paramount importance in that it wins friends and retains votes, it is of no similar value when viewed years after the event. From the contemporary point of view Grant had two characteristics which militated against political maneuverability. The first was his inability to give a favorable complexion to favorable actions, much less to actions where he had been at fault. The second was his inability to pretend friendship toward those for whom he felt scorn. Both these traits were exemplified in his break with Johnson in connection with the Tenure of Office Act and the removal from office of Secretary of War Stanton. The situation occurred before Grant took office as President, it is worth considering here.

Briefly, Johnson wanted to rid himself of Stanton for

Grant's Last Stand

reasons which it is unnecessary to pursue. He demanded Stanton's resignation. Stanton refused to vacate the office, his position being that under the Term of Office bill it was especially intended that, in the absence of Congress, Cabinet officers should be beyond the reach of Executive anger. Congress was not then in session. Johnson therefore sent word to Stanton, suspending him from office and directing him to turn the records over to Grant. This assignment Grant accepted reluctantly.

The public sided with Stanton in the controversy. Grant, although disliking Stanton's arrogance and lack of tact, believed him a conscientious public servant and felt that his removal was illegal—had in fact hotly argued the point with Johnson. But Grant knew that in the temporary suspension of Stanton the President and Commander-in-Chief was acting within his technical rights. Furthermore, Grant believed that by obeying orders and accepting the assignment he was preventing the appointment of some unscrupulous Johnson favorite. The public did not see this and Grant's reputation suffered through lack of explanation—which he would not give.

At this point came another difficult twist of events. On January 13, 1868, the Senate, again in session, declared that Johnson's reasons for suspending Stanton were insufficient. The next day Grant "went to the office of the Secretary of War, locked and bolted the door on the outside, turned the key over to the Adjutant-General" and notified the President that by law he (Grant) was no longer Secretary of War. Stanton was back again. The President was furious. He stated that Grant had

A Question of Veracity

accepted the position with the understanding that he would "return the office to my possession in time to enable me to appoint a successor"; Johnson took Grant to task at a special Cabinet meeting, giving a version which in today's language called Grant a "double-crosser." It became a question of veracity. Grant did not make a good impression on some of the Cabinet members.³ Probably he said little, and that in humble tone.

A student of Grant's character is impressed by the probability that, as Coolidge puts it, Johnson did not comprehend finality of purpose in one who did not storm and bluster. Grant stated that he informed the President verbally that should Stanton be reinstated by the Senate he, Grant, would vacate the office of Secretary of War. "As Grant was leaving (the room) after announcing his decision, Johnson said he would expect to see him again. To Johnson this meant further argument with the probability of Grant's acceding to his views. To Grant it meant nothing of the sort. He had made up his mind. Johnson had misjudged Grant once before when he told Sherman Grant was going to Mexico after Grant had said he did not intend to go. He might have profited by that experience."⁴

Sherman, as always picturesque of speech, did not

³See *Diary of Gideon Welles*: "General Grant was humble, hesitating, and he evidently felt that his position was equivocal and not to his credit. There was, I think, an impression on the minds of all present (there certainly was on mine) that a consciousness that he had acted with duplicity—not been faithful and true to the man who had confided in and trusted him—oppressed General Grant. His manner, never very commanding, was almost abject, and he left the room with less respect, I apprehend, from those present than ever before."

⁴*Ulysses S. Grant*, by Louis A. Coolidge.

Grant's Last Stand

mince matters in his subsequent letter to President Johnson:

I have been with General Grant in the midst of death and slaughter—when the howls of people reached him after Shiloh; when messengers were speeding to and from his army bearing slanders to induce his removal before he took Vicksburg; in Chattanooga when the soldiers were stealing the corn of the starving mules to satisfy their own hunger; at Nashville when he was ordered to the “forlorn hope” to command the Army of the Potomac so often defeated—and yet I never saw him more troubled than since he has been in Washington, and been compelled to read himself a “sneak and deceiver” based on reports of four of the Cabinet, and apparently your knowledge.

General Grant's chagrin was not openly expressed. It was sublimated into contempt not only for the President but for those Cabinet members who had backed him up in the imputations against Grant's character. Never again did he have intercourse with any of them. Although the episode was typical of the General's inability (at that stage of his political development) to compromise with enemies: to wheedle and flatter and tangle them in their own net, after the manner of the Great Emancipator of that day and the manner of the wise political presidents of later days—yet it was not such bad statesmanship after all. For as was said of Grover Cleveland, we “love him for the enemies he has made.”

The people stuck by Grant. Before long the enemy in the form of Johnson was on the verge of impeachment.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Only a President

§ 1

IT IS a curious commentary on the springs of action that so many public men who have risen from meager beginnings have become conservative when placed in authority; whereas those of easier origin, born with a golden spoon in mouth, have tended to swing in the opposite direction. While the statement is open to contradiction and exception as are most generalities, it will easily stand the test of an evening's argument and the examination of countless biographies. Calvin Coolidge, the Vermont farm lad, whose father gave him a dime as a reward and admonished him not to spend it recklessly;¹ Herbert Hoover, the Iowa boy who once welcomed a small pay envelope; Alfred Smith, genuinely proud of what he called his F.F.M. University (Fulton Street Fish Market); Grover Cleveland, staunch of word, who learned his politics in the back rooms of Albany bars, come readily to mind as examples of the former.

On the other hand, that six feet two and a half inches of body and brain called Thomas Jefferson rode out of a beautiful home at Monticello to become the creator of Democracy and leader of the liberal thought of his time.

¹*The Life of Calvin Coolidge*, by Horace Green.

Grant's Last Stand

By the more conservative element of his own class Theodore Roosevelt, who emerged from Harvard University to fight crime, corruption, and the trusts, was looked upon as radical, though at bottom he was American to the core.² As for the present Franklin Roosevelt, who sprang from a similar background, the verdict has still to trickle through the time sieve. But this much could be said, in the summer of 1936: That President Roosevelt is one who might have inherited ease, but turned his attention, with what ultimate soundness, motive, and success history will tell, to matters of economic and social reform.

An obvious exception to prove our rule is Andrew Jackson; for Jackson, who was born a frontier boy without advantages, refused one day to black an officer's boots and received in return a sabre cut which disfigured him for life. To the end he remained a rebel, and, almost single-handed, fought and beat the banking system in general, and Vanderbilt in particular.

In line with the generalization stated at the opening of this chapter, Ulysses Grant should have swung toward the conservative side of that arbitrary division, which separates labor from capital. Grant, who was not an imaginative statesman, did indeed veer toward this point of view but not, one ventures to state, to the extreme which modern writers, judging by today's advanced

²Theodore Roosevelt, Sixth Annual Message to Congress, Dec. 3, 1906: "To preach hatred of the rich man as such, to carry on a campaign of slander and invective against him, to seek to mislead and inflame to madness honest men whose lives are hard and who have not the kind of mental training which will permit them to appreciate the danger in the doctrines preached—all this is to commit a crime against the body politic and to be false to every worthy principle and tradition of American national life."

Only a President

standards of social experiment, are accustomed to state.

Because Grant had rich friends, because he was so ingenuous as to accept gifts from them without the oral examination which a man of his equestrian knowledge should have made, it has been the fashion to consider him a consistent tool of vested interests. Yet curiously enough, immediately after his second term as President, when he went abroad for the first time and only time in his life, the English laboring classes made of him their special friend³ whereas Society, while going through the proper forms, by no means took this uncommon gentleman to its heart.

§ 2

One of the more recent estimates of Grant as a politician—a rôle which, as distinguished from that of statesman, is not one which he essayed to fill—repeats the charge that as time went on he became a party boss rather than a President of the whole people, and that he ended as a guardian of reactionary economic interests. The point of view, though not new, is accentuated in a documented summary of a period about which we have had repeated doses of vitriolic argument and for the most part a dearth of facts. Mr. Hesseltine⁴ leads us onward step by step, with an apparent lack of bias, which is difficult to resist, to the picture of a man sincere but clumsy, short-sighted, and obstinate—who was the

³“English tradespeople and working men held him in higher honor than he thought. To them he was the world’s most famous living general, personifying in their eyes the marvel of democracy.”—Louis A. Coolidge, *The Life of U. S. Grant*.

⁴*Ulysses S. Grant: Politician*, by William B. Hesseltine.

Grant's Last Stand

focal point of schemes no better than those hatched under the eye of Warren Harding. It is true that the odious "Whiskey Ring" in Grant's first term left in its wake a memory not much more palatable than that of Teapot Dome, and that the operations of the infamous Crédit Mobilier of America were little better. The latter, though generally regarded as one of the Grantism scandals, could not in the last analysis be charged to "Grant, his associates or his especial champions in Congress."⁵

It would be impossible to challenge the *basis* of such a critical attitude, even if space permitted presentation of facts, some of them extenuating in their nature. This, however, must be emphasized:

In the case of living men one must consider importantly the enemies which they make, the friends they keep, and the effect which both may have upon the public mind. But in looking backward such factors are of secondary importance. History will not overlook the completed building in a study of its carpentry, nor lose sight of larger achievements in a welter of conflicting aims and personalities.

There were four major achievements in General Grant's administration.

⁵*Ibid.*

CHAPTER XXIX

The Principle of International Arbitration

FIRST of the important accomplishments of Grant's administration was his insistence for the first time in American history upon the principle of international arbitration as a war deterrent and its successful application through the Treaty of Washington.

In Grant's day Cabinet officers, and the translation of executive plans through Cabinet organization, were infinitely more important than they are today.

Grant's first choice of Cabinet members consisted of Hamilton Fish, of New York, Secretary of State; A. T. Stewart, Secretary of the Treasury; Judge E. Rockwood Hoar, of Massachusetts, Attorney General; General Rawlins, Secretary of War; Adolph E. Borie, Secretary of the Navy; J. D. Cox, Governor of Ohio, Secretary of the Interior. The pay-off post of Postmaster-General went to Congressman John A. J. Creswell of Maryland. Congress, after confirming Mr. Stewart's nomination, dug up a long-forgotten law to the effect the post of Secretray of the Treasury was not to be filled by any person engaged in commerce; George S. Boutwell, Congressman from Massachusetts, was appointed in Stewart's place. Borie, Secretary of the Navy, was an invalid and resigned as soon as it could be done diplomatically, whereupon the appointment went to George M. Robeson of New Jersey. J. Lothrop Motley, historian of the

Grant's Last Stand

Dutch Republic, was appointed Minister to the then difficult post of Ambassador to the Court of St. James's. He was a close friend of, and generally considered mouthpiece for Grant's arch enemy, that fine old humorless Brahmin, Charles Sumner, chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Try as he might, Sumner could not sense what lay beneath Grant's simple covering, nor Lincoln's quaint and elemental gaucheries. Grant's quizzical opinion of Sumner was given in answer to a friend who remarked that Sumner had no faith in the Bible.

"Well," Grant answered, "he didn't write it."

There were well-known names in the Cabinet. In retrospect it is difficult to understand the furor which greeted its announcement, except for two of the posts which had been given for purposes of compliment with the expectation of resignation. Had Grant understood the technique of trial balloon publicity, the compliment could have been made public without lowering the dignity of Cabinet status through the actual acceptance and resignation of a Cabinet position.

Ever since British recognition of the South's right to secede (which meant that Southern vessels could be sustained in and operated from British ports), the United States had had a grievance. In regard to England, Senator Sumner backed, if he did not instigate, Motley's plan¹ for demanding apologies to "massive grievances," not to be made good by mere money payment, etc.²

Senator Sumner was also in favor of the withdrawal

¹Motley's memorandum to State Department.

²*Ulysses S. Grant*, by Louis Coolidge.

The Principle of International Arbitration
of the British flag from this hemisphere—including the provinces and islands!³

The President, undoubtedly reflecting the attitude of Secretary of State Fish, believed that when England and the United States approached this momentous question it should be done “with an appreciation of what is due the rights, dignity, and honor of each, and with the determination not only to remove the causes of complaint in the past, but to lay the foundation of a broad principle of public law which will prevent future differences and tend to firm and continued peace and friendship.”⁴ But in spite of their conciliatory and far-reaching attitude, Grant and Fish felt that the matter could better be settled in Washington in an atmosphere of British weekend parties and London dinner tables. They agreed with Sumner that the spirit of apology by England and sense of her wrongdoing were more important than money damages.

When Ambassador Motley reached London, and in spite of the specific instructions given him by the State Department, he had so far re-oriented his point of view, had so much considered himself an appointee-in-spirit of Charles Sumner that in his conversation with Lord Clarendon⁵ he again insisted that British official friendship for the South had been the “fountain head of the disasters which had been caused to the American people, both individually and collectively.” Thereafter, as is the custom with undiplomatic diplomats, Motley was ig-

³Quoted by General Charles King in *The True Ulysses S. Grant*.

⁴Grant's first Annual Message to Congress.

⁵Who promulgated the unsuccessful Johnson-Clarendon Convention.

Grant's Last Stand

nored by his own government, and the matter was pursued in other fashion over his head. Motley was eventually succeeded as Minister to Great Britain. Sumner was bitterly disappointed and his chagrin was consistently visited upon Grant.

Through long-drawn and skilful negotiations Fish managed to have the British propose the meeting in Washington of a Joint High Commission—whose determinations were later known as the Treaty of Washington. This commission was to consider not only questions of British possessions in North America, questions arising out of Fisheries, etc.; but specifically, and at American insistence, was to consider reparation for damage done to American shipping by the Southern cruisers fitted out in English ports during the Civil War.

A mere list of names of the men involved in the treaty of Washington as well as those comprising the subsequent Board of Arbitration which met at Geneva—such names in the United States as Caleb Cushing, William M. Evarts, Bancroft Davis, Ebenezer Hoar, and Samuel Nelson of the Supreme Court; and for England, Sir Edward Thornton, Sir Stafford Northcote, Professor Montague Bernard of Oxford; and for Canada the Prime Minister, Sir John MacDonald—is to indicate the historical importance of the settlement. Here we indicate in a few hundred words a question to which many books have been devoted.

In our treatment of Grant's character we are concerned with one phase primarily: The inability of Grant to swing to his own point of view men who disliked him personally. Sumner was one of those well-intentioned

The Principle of International Arbitration

Brahmins whose measure Lincoln had taken early. Sometimes when an important issue was at stake Lincoln would "slip up" to Sumner's house for tea (which the latter was particularly fond of brewing himself) and gossip like an old woman, until Sumner's feathers were all smoothed out. Sumner did not realize until after Lincoln's death that all the time it was Lincoln who was the master. Sumner was flattered, but Lincoln had his way.

Yet here was one of the most serious questions in the history of America's foreign policy on the verge of being wrecked because of the enmity between Grant and Sumner. "Many a time," wrote Carl Schurz,⁶ who also opposed Grant, "I saw Sumner restlessly pacing up and down in his room and exclaiming with uplifted hands: 'I pray that the President may be right in delaying. But I am afraid, I am almost sure he is not. I trust his fidelity but I cannot understand him.'"

When one evening during the San Domingo difficulties Grant tried Lincoln's diplomacy of dropping up to the house to see the domineering Senator (who happened to be entertaining friends at dinner) the result, through apparent misunderstanding of motives, was unfortunate for both concerned. Yet Sumner saw fit to refer to Grant as "the great quarreler."

To one friend, Grant remarked that Sumner was the only man "I was ever anything but my real self to; the only man I ever tried to conciliate by artificial means."

⁶*The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz.* The occasions to which Schurz refers were before the break between Grant and Sumner, after which Sumner's language was less restrained.

Grant's Last Stand

It is written that at one time when Grant was walking past Sumner's house with a friend, the friend was startled to see Grant shake his fist and hear him say, "The man who lives up there has abused me in a way I have never suffered from any other man living."

In such a manner did Cabot and Lodge and Woodrow Wilson tear one at another when the latter fought for peace among all nations. Wilson was broken on the rack. Grant was not. If, as we believe, Ulysses Grant was the most peaceful fighting man which history has to offer, he was likewise the most determined man of peace. It has been our contention that in retrospect the means of accomplishment are of secondary importance. In spite of personal equations, Grant won. For all his power, the impressive Sumner was removed from the Committee on Foreign Relations; and the stalwart intellectual succumbed, broken by the battle, to *Angina pectoris*. Grant annexed San Domingo; collected from Britain a peaceful settlement of \$15,500,000 for the "Alabama" claims, and made of Canada our friendly neighbor—without barrier from Quebec on the East coast across the continent to the far Pacific Sea.

For the first time on this continent the Principle of International Arbitration was established as a war preventative.

CHAPTER XXX

Black Friday

§ 1

BEFORE cataloguing other major accomplishments of General Grant's administration one must examine further evidence on the dark side of the ledger. Reference has been made to his acceptance of gifts without thought as to their propriety. Some of these gifts were natural outpourings of kindness; others undoubtedly were made in hopes of *quid pro quo*. The President accepted them without question, influenced no doubt by Mrs. Grant, who took delight in White House prestige and who was only to learn by slow degrees the dangers of misinterpretation.

A case in point was Adolf E. Borie of Philadelphia, generally believed to have been one of the principals behind the purchase for Grant of a homestead in Philadelphia. Borie's temporary appointment as Secretary of the Navy met with a storm of abuse—in spite of the fact that Borie did not want the portfolio and resigned soon after obtaining it. Long before the fatal stock market panic of September 18, 1869, known as Black Friday, Grant had taken a cruise to Fall River with two of the conspirators chiefly involved in the gold panic, Jay Gould and Fisk—a fact which was made much of, although of course the General was ignorant of the schemes the plotters had in mind, and despite the fact that later and more astute Presidents have been known

Grant's Last Stand

to consort with millionaires with impunity. But in Grant's case the millionaires were not men of high ideals, and Grant was long obtuse as to their objectives. Then, too, the General, who had managed (when in the army) to withstand the onslaughts of favor-seeking relatives, relaxed his scrutiny as President: woke up one fine day, it is said, to discover that thirty-three of those related by blood or marriage were in governmental berths of one sort or another. Napoleon could do such things, but the practice does not stand in favor in republics where the voter rules.

There was also criticism of the men in closer contact with the President, criticism based largely on the fact that they smelt of the army. But soldier King¹ gives a likely and likable picture of the White House staff in question:

There was not a symptom of swagger about the four officers on duty: Badeau wore spectacles and a crippled foot, Dent a perpetual smile, Babcock the look rather of the politician than the soldier (and in due season developed some of the characteristics), and none of them wore uniform. As for Porter—Porter, with his inscrutable face, his consummate poise and *sang-froid*—Porter who, with sepulchral gravity, could say the most side-splitting things—Porter was a joy perennial to his chief and a tower of strength to his administration, but the fact remained that they were all four of the army and that was enough in the eyes of the fault-finders. Four long years Porter stood by his General, but at the close of the first administration he had the deep sagacity to look to the future and accept a more lucrative and far less hazardous employment.

One of the worst pages on the ledger of those years

¹*The True General Grant*, by General Charles A. King.

Black Friday

was the stock market panic already mentioned. To what extent it was chargeable to Grant is as difficult to discover as to say whether the panic of 1932 and subsequent depression was due in part to Hoover or to Roosevelt or to world conditions for which neither were responsible. It is incontestable, however, that Grant had been used by some of the men at the bottom of the Black Friday gold conspiracy. The arch conspirators were Jay Gould and his partner in many fast deals, "Jim" Fisk, who with Gould shared the doubtful reputation of being one of the most dramatic and unpredictable figures in Wall Street. Gould, who was of Semitic background, was close-mouthed, shrewd, indirect. He was a good family man. Fisk was flamboyant, florid and immoral. Both were ruthless. Gould and Fisk owned, among their properties, the Erie Railroad, while Fisk also owned a fleet of Fall River boats and liked to be called "Admiral."

A third figure in the proceedings was Abel Rathbone Corbin, an elderly lobbyist and retired speculator, who had lately become a member of the Grant circle by marrying the General's sister. Gould's entrée to the President was by way of brother-in-law Corbin. Hessel-tine offers that "a common unscrupulous acquisitiveness united these two buccaneers in a partnership which centered in their railway operations, but whose far-flung frontier comprehended every field where illicit profits might be made." They operated the Erie from a New York opera house which Gould used as a rendezvous for seducing judges, politicians and others necessary to their schemes; while Fisk's seductions were practised on the weaker sex.

Grant's Last Stand

Gould appreciated that Erie Railroad shipments were falling off because farmers' shipments abroad were affected by the price of gold. From the Gould-Fisk point of view it therefore became advisable not only to manipulate the gold market but to influence government buying and selling of gold. When President Grant was en route to the Peace Jubilee in Boston he stayed in Corbin's house in New York. Corbin, who had already started his propaganda to convert Grant to Gould's theory of the necessity of crop movements, managed to have Gould come to the house. It was arranged that the President should finish the trip to Boston on one of Fisk's Long Island Sound steamers. The roundabout manner by which this crew of schemers alternately endeavored to pump and persuade their silent guest can best be left to the imagination. Grant left no account, although it appears that his suspicions were for the time being aroused.² Later Corbin arranged another meeting at his own house. Corbin stated subsequently that the President admonished him for admitting Gould to the house. Gould, the President felt, was "always trying to find something out," and so stated to Mrs. Grant. There came a time later in the summer when Grant had escaped from Washington to a little hamlet in the hills of Pennsylvania. It was imperative for the gold conspirators to be sure that the President would not change his policy nor direct the Secretary of the Treasury, Boutwell, to sell gold. When Corbin sent a special letter of advice to the President, giving the messenger a letter of introduction

²Hesseltine's account in *Ulysses S. Grant: Politician* is the best.

Black Friday

to Horace Porter, now private secretary, Grant's suspicions were aroused, and through Mrs. Grant he sent to his brother-in-law a severe rebuke against stock market speculation.

Without going into details it is enough to say that the plotters became frightened, while in Wall Street the bears and bulls each hurried to their separate dens. Fisk, one step behind the turn of events, still bought madly, believing the government's policy unchanged. The gold market leaped to 162. Gould at first unloaded carefully here and there, then suddenly dumped his holdings on the market. Within a few minutes gold was down to 135; there was wild disorder; Fisk repudiated his contracts; and great was the number of victims in one of the greatest panics of the Street's history. It is interesting to note that Gould and Fisk continued their partnership.

Easy as it may be to look back on events and state that Grant should have taken at once the measure of these men, it was more difficult to foresee the direction of their cupidity. There have been many, such as the Swedish match king, Kreuger, who have deceived men of their own profession. The difficulty is, and the evidence points unmistakably to the fact that when the pendulum swung for Grant, who had been poor for the first forty years of life, it swung too far in the opposite direction. During the next twenty years he was inordinately influenced by men of means—if not for his own sake, at least for the sake of Mrs. Grant and the children. Their horizon had indeed widened since the days of Hardscrabble Farm,

Grant's Last Stand

and it has never been questioned that Grant was as indulgent at the fireside as he was adamant abroad.

§ 2

Before surrendering Grant to a layman's life, it is pleasant to see the white-capped waves again. Despite open enemies and covert friends, despite some rottenness in Denmark, Grant's régime covers one of the most important eras of our history. Besides the establishment of the theory of International Arbitration (the settlement of the Alabama claims and the fisheries and boundaries disputes) the administration is credited with the inauguration of the theory of Civil Service employment. Through Grant's adamant veto of inflation it saw the establishment of our currency on a sound basis, and as Major-General Harbord has pointed out, the "earlier development of the great West, the laying of the great transcontinental lines . . . the reduction of war taxation and the great war. . . . It was a period which has been followed too closely by great inventions and great events to have received its due attention from the political students of our time."

All is in the point of view. It has been the fashion of some writers to place the Grant administration in such low position that one may be permitted to conclude this brief summary with words from our oft-quoted Coolidge³ in the American Statesmen Series.

Grant made serious mistakes; . . . they seldom affected adversely measures of broad public policy. When we recall the

³Louis A. Coolidge, *The Life of Ulysses S. Grant*.

Black Friday

great accomplishments of his administrations,—the establishment of the principle of international arbitration through the Treaty of Washington and the adjudication of the Alabama claims by the Geneva Tribunal; the upholding of American dignity and the assertion of American rights in the matter of Virginius and the handling of the Cuban complications; the rehabilitation of the national credit, and the maintenance of the national honor, the inauguration of a consistent and merciful policy toward the Indians; the recognition of the principle of civil service reform; and the restoration of a semblance of order in the South,—we are tempted to subordinate, though we cannot honestly ignore the personal differences which marred the period of his service and the public scandal attaching to some of those who, in the shelter of his friendship and of offices bestowed upon them through his favor, betrayed his trust. It was a time of universal prodigality and extravagance, when speculation flourished and the nation's moral fiber had been coarsened by the excesses of war. It was not strange that the widespread taint invaded public place. It would have been more strange if it had not.

[And again:] In constructive achievements, coming as it did directly after the demoralization of the war and the upset of traditions due to Lincoln's military measures in that imperative emergency, Grant's Administration ranks second only to that of Washington, who had to set the Government in motion under the Constitution. He might safely "leave comparisons to history." If we except the baneful Southern problem which was bequeathed to him, and where his fault, if fault there was, lay in the rigid execution of the law, it would be hard to place the finger now on an executive policy approved by him which subsequent experience has condemned.

§ 3

In considering the next few years of Grant's existence one recalls the reply of the practical, modern boy whose

Grant's Last Stand

father said to him, "Some day you will be President of the United States."

The boy answered, "I don't want to be. The job has no future."

CHAPTER XXXI

A Job Without a Future

THE abuse which Lincoln, Andrew Jackson, Wilson and Cleveland received in the White House was small compared to that poured on Grant toward the end of the second term. Cleveland got relief by writing long letters in the early hours of the morning in his small, conscientious script—it was before the typewriter had come into use—and fishing or hunting trips with old cronies.¹ Likely as not Grant would clamp his jaw a little tighter and not forgive the man he believed had wronged him.

There was less ground for belief that Grant could win a third consecutive term, than there was that Coolidge would run again at the time of the “I-do-not-choose” pronouncement. But there was an adamant quality in Grant which called forth unusual vitriolics.

In *Harper's Weekly* for January 6, 1877, a full-page spread with an illustrated cartoon is devoted to advertising the following already mentioned sentiment printed in large italics beneath a picture of Grant:

The drunken Democrat whom the Republicans dragged out of the Galena gutter, besmeared with the blood of his countrymen slain in domestic broil, and lifted to a high pedestal as

¹Compare letter from Cleveland to the author's father, the late George Walton Green.

Grant's Last Stand

Moloch of their worship rules . . . over the prostrate ruins of Washington's Republic.

Strong language for a conservative weekly, for any weekly. Typical of the rebounds in public opinion in Grant's case is the fact that three months later the same organ was writing editorial pæans, of which the following is typical. After outlining the accomplishments of Grant's régime, *Harper's Weekly* estimates that:

General Grant both as soldier and statesman has done more than any man since Washington to preserve the theory of popular government in this country, and, by his influence, abroad.

The General himself had experienced almost parallel feelings about public office. By 1876 he had become so thoroughly disgusted with the whole business that he wrote (curious things for a man of his military mold) the most apologetic farewell message ever sent to Congress by a Chief Executive:

It was my fortune, or misfortune, to be called to the office of Chief Executive without any previous political training . . . Under such circumstances it is but reasonable to suppose that errors of judgment must have occurred. Even had they not, differences of opinion between the Executive, bound by an oath to the strict performance of his duties, and writers and debaters, must have arisen . . . Mistakes have been made, as all can see, and I admit, but it seems to me oftener in the selection made in the assistants appointed to aid in carrying out the various duties of administering the government—and in nearly every case selected without a personal acquaintance with the appointee, but upon recommendation of the representatives

A Job Without a Future

chosen directly by the people . . . Failures have been errors of judgment, not of intent.

Time, the Healer, got in his usual work. After two years of travel and foreign adulation, with friends at home to make him believe the call was irresistible, and with Mrs. Grant anxious to get back to the scene of her Washington triumphs, the General decided that there was something to this third term business after all. While indicating that he did not choose another term he left the door ajar. The strategy of the elder Republican leaders was to keep him abroad until the psychological moment when, fresh from his triumphant world tour, he could sweep the convention. Grant made two stipulations: first, that there must be evidence that the party was overwhelmingly for him, and second that his name was to be withdrawn without blemish if serious opposition developed. He wrote to Don Cameron of Pennsylvania authorizing withdrawal under these circumstances. But Roscoe Conkling, Cameron, and Messrs Logan and Washburne of the Old Guard had their reasons for saying nothing about this letter. They let the battle go to the bitter end. Equally bitter was Grant's defeat and discomfiture. He had been trapped into the very situation he wished to avoid.

The convention was memorable for several reasons. Not only was it one of the longest and bitterest on record, including those which nominated Woodrow Wilson and John W. Davis in later years; but it was here that Roscoe Conkling in his nominating speech, which was exceptionally and stupidly insulting to other candidates,

Grant's Last Stand

made use of the famous apple tree legend, as a sort of battle cry. Working up to a climax, Conkling's sonorous Shakesperean-actor's voice was heard echoing to the rafters:

And when asked what state he hails from
Our sole reply shall be
He hails from Appomattox
And its famous apple tree.

while the convention roared and stamped in unison, until Grant, sitting at the other end of the wire in Galena, turned to his family with something like a sigh² and said: "I'm afraid I'm to be nominated."

Bishop, in his book on *Presidential Nominations and Elections*, says that from first to last Roscoe Conkling's manner was one "studied to taunt his opponents. Nothing approaching it in arrogance and insolence has been witnessed in a political convention, either before or since. If there had been any chance of a compromise of one faction in favor of the other, he destroyed it utterly in the first half-hour." This, in addition to the fact that the Old Guard triumvirate had been none too delicate in their pre-convention methods, and finally because of their failure to achieve the unit rule—by which Grant would have had the solid vote of New York, Illinois and Pennsylvania to start with—spelled Grant's failure.

When he heard that Garfield had been nominated he flicked the ash from his cigar³ and said, "Garfield is a good man. I am glad of it. Good night, gentlemen."

²Both these phrases are adapted from Louis A. Coolidge's excellent book, *The Life of U. S. Grant*.

³Both these phrases are adapted from Louis A. Coolidge's excellent book, *The Life of U. S. Grant*.

A Job Without a Future

But he never forgave those who he thought had tricked him, including even his old friend Elihu Washburne,⁴ who had picked him from the dust heap at the beginning of the war, secured his first commission as brigadier-general, and first suggested him as lieutenant-general. For a while he "sulked in his tent," that being the usual expression applied to men who are disappointed and retire to think things over, but eventually he went on the stump for Garfield, at a time when matters looked bad for the Republican nominee. He was not taken into the councils for the incoming administration, however, and many appointments were made with the apparent intent of slapping at Grant and his friends.

⁴General Chetlaine of Galena in his *Memories of Fifty Years* gives a pathetic account of Washburne's attempt to reestablish friendship with Grant. The misunderstanding was never cleared up.

CHAPTER XXXII

Treasures Upon Earth¹

§ 1

ULYSSES SIMPSON GRANT had never been wise in the ways of money-makers; never since that day back on the Ohio farm when his father sent him to buy a beloved colt, and the boy had said to the owner, "Papa says I may offer you twenty dollars for the colt, but if you won't take that, I am to offer you twenty-two and a half, but if you won't take that, to give you twenty-five." It does not require great imagination to determine the price he paid.

After the third term fiasco Grant was left without occupation or income. He was not the type that could be of service on the directorship of life insurance companies. In those days there were no Townsend plans for ex-heroes; nor has this country any offices where the experience of its living ex-presidents can be put to suitable use. The fact was unfortunate for Grant. For others it may have been fortunate, since adversity has its uses. History has been enriched.

Remembering, perhaps, his early successes in Mexico, or because of his liking for Mexicans, he organized, with a man called Romero, Mexican Minister in Washington,

¹In this and later chapters we elaborate the events briefly summarized at the beginning. There is naturally some repetition of phraseology.

Treasures Upon Earth

a company for the purpose of building a railroad to Guatemala. This and other enterprises were not successful. President Arthur, who succeeded Garfield, also appointed the General as one of the commissioners to conclude a commercial treaty with Mexico.

One suspects that the General wanted to prove himself powerful in the money marts as he had been in other spheres, and perhaps had he started earlier in life his character and ability to learn would have stood him in good stead. It is said that at this stage of his life he thought in terms of large figures—although his personal habits were not extravagant. He had, however, outgrown Galena and wanted to live in the city by the Hudson. At about the time of the Mexican interests a group consisting of William H. Vanderbilt, Jay Gould and John Mackay had raised for him through public subscription and *The New York Times* a fund yielding an income of \$15,000, the capital being approximately \$250,000. This was actually the work of George W. Jones, at that time proprietor of *The Times*. The nation had presented him with two houses, and he had additional income which should have been ample, provided he had been content to settle in a small community.

Metropolitan forces, however, were at work. He was even more devoted to his wife than most army men, and it is to be presumed that Julia Dent Grant preferred the city. His two married sons and his grandchildren were living near by. Ulysses S. Grant, Jr., known as "Buck," and the supposed business man of the family, had formed a partnership with an amazing young fellow called Ferdinand Ward. Jesse Grant was studying at the

Grant's Last Stand

Columbia Law School and Frederick Dent Grant was in the army. So the General bought himself a brick house off Central Park, where he dispensed such hospitality as was agreeable, making as many trips a week as he wanted to the office of the Mexican Southern Railway and later to his private office at the headquarters of Grant & Ward. His investments through these young fellows seemed to be yielding amazing profits. He was contented in his home. All that the veteran asked for was a chance to slide in peace along the autumn road which all must follow.

We now come to view in greater detail the events of Grant's final catastrophe, reviewed briefly at the opening of this book. Once more we must picture to ourselves a stoop-shouldered and somewhat portly veteran, sixty-three years of age:—quiet-mannered, dignified, and soft-spoken—a man whose granite jaws were hidden beneath nut-brown whiskers streaked with gray, and whose steel-blue eyes were often veiled behind the smoke of his favorite Havanas, as he talked with old cronies that dropped into the house or office, or took a naïve delight in going about with the rich men of affairs, some of whom had become his benefactors.

§ 2

Every generation has its Jesse Livermores; its Mississippi Bubbles; and its Swedish Match Kings. Ferdinand Ward was of a class with the matchless Krueger, who committed suicide after involving in his net of daring fabric, as well as fabrication, some of the world's shrewdest investors. Although Ward was younger than

Treasures Upon Earth

Krueger at the time of the latter's hey-day, he had the same mysterious ability to insinuate important things which were without foundation, the same flair for talking the language of his victims. It is small wonder that so honest a man as Grant became inveigled. When Grant went abroad he intrusted his investments to his son Buck [Ulysses, Jr.], who, through Ward's manipulations had done extremely well with them. Those sums had enabled the General to extend his trip around the world. Ward had already persuaded Buck's father-in-law Chaffee, the Colorado millionaire, who had settled in New York, to contribute heavily, and he now permitted the General to become a silent partner, although seeing to it that the latter was not silent in the way of paid-in capital. The private banking firm was known as Grant & Ward and the other silent partner was James S. Fish, president of the Marine Bank of Brooklyn, through which the firm's checks were passed. Grant expressly stipulated that there should be no government contracts.

"I had been President of the United States," he testified later, "and did not think it was suitable for me to have my name connected with government contracts, and I knew there was no large profit in them except by dishonest measures. There are some men who get government contracts year in and year out, and whether they manage their affairs dishonestly to make a profit or not, they are sometimes supposed to, and I did not think it was any place for me."

Mr. Ward, by this time known as one of the young Napoleons of the Street, had several lines of operation,

Grant's Last Stand

added to a stunning personality. The most successful was his use of General Grant's name with deft insinuations — nothing so crude as writing, about the General's influence in getting contracts from the government. To the Grant family, who had expressly stipulated against this sort of thing, he talked of railroad contracts and large rates of interest to subcontractors for temporary loans.

The firm, which started with a paid-in capital of \$400,000, at one time had a deposit in Fish's bank of approximately \$1,000,000. The General really paid no attention to the business, and even if he had, he was not the only one fooled. One investor, returning from abroad to inquire for fruits of his \$50,000 investment, was smilingly greeted by Wizard Ward. The latter consulted various ledgers, then without batting an eye, handed back the astounded investor a check for \$250,000 (from capital of course).

"Keep it," said the luckless Mr. X in substance, "and let it work for me again."

§ 3

On Friday, May 2, General Grant limped down the steps of his town house, 3 East 66th Street, and was given a hand up behind his favorite thoroughbreds for his customary drive to Wall Street. He was in a complacent mood that day. The game leg, originally injured when his mount fell after the battle of Shiloh, and again by a fall on the icy pavement before Christmas of the previous year, was much improved. Along Central Park the crocuses were out, which perhaps he did not notice; but the black team was stepping nicely, and this he did

Treasures Upon Earth

observe with satisfaction. And who can deny that the flowers themselves called him to share the healing dew of their content: had he not as a young man in Mexico stopped to observe in battle, and later written home about the beauty of the mountainsides covered with palms which "*toss to and fro in the wind like plumes in a helmet*"? (Italics are author's.)

On the floor above the show offices of Grant & Ward was a private office suitably arranged for the General. Periodically young Mr. Ward placed a fresh box of cigars on the desk. Whether he had arranged this upstairs room, in order that the General might not overhear private conversations, does not appear on the record. Nor is there evidence as to who were the callers on that particular day, which, although pay day, passed by without anything of note.

§ 4

Sunday, May 4, 1884. Ward dropped up to the house to see General Grant and remarked that the Marine Bank of Brooklyn was in difficulties. It was a temporary difficulty, he explained to the General and to Buck, owing to the fact that several hundred thousand dollars of its cash reserve had been drawn out by the City Chamberlain. The bank was depository for the city. It would be a serious matter for the firm if the bank should fail carrying with it the firm's deposits. But if the General could just borrow \$150,000 for twenty-four hours, he, Ward, would try to do the same, and the embarrassment would be relieved by Monday or Tues-

Grant's Last Stand

day at the latest. What were Grant's thoughts no one knows. He went to see William H. Vanderbilt. Vanderbilt said, "I will not do this for the Marine Bank of Brooklyn or for the firm of Grant & Ward. I will lend you, General, personally, \$150,000." Grant accepted the check silently. He endorsed it to Ferdinand Ward.

On Tuesday, May 6, Grant again drove to the office, this time not so complacently. The black team was less spirited; the crocuses waved no message. Ascending the old-fashioned elevator he met his son Ulysses, Jr. Buck was white-faced. Buck said in effect, "The firm of Grant & Ward has failed. Ward has disappeared. There is no record of Vanderbilt's \$150,000. It was not deposited with the Marine Bank."

A search of the safe revealed few securities.

The General spoke scarcely a word. He retired to his private office. Adam Badeau, hurrying in, found his old chief seated in the rear office, calm in the midst of stress. Grant said simply, "We are all ruined here." Late that afternoon the cashier found him with his head buried on his arms. A big pad lay beside him. On the pad was a pencilled column of figures, names of friends and relatives whom he had dragged down.

Grant, and his sons, his wife, his nieces, and some old war friends who had invested through Grant, were wiped out. Worse yet, the country thought what it wanted to think about the veteran who had thrown his benefactions into questionable Wall Street operations. The debt to Vanderbilt he considered a private obligation. To Vanderbilt he turned over No. 3 East 66th Street, the farm in Missouri, a house in Philadelphia, *all* his war

Treasures Upon Earth

trophies, including the sword that General Lee had been unable to capture. It should be recorded to Vanderbilt's credit that the millionaire tried to return all these securities, that the family refused to accept, and that the nation was the gainer, since Mr. Vanderbilt ultimately turned the relics over to the museum at Washington. To his niece the General wrote:

"Financially the Grant family is ruined for the present, and by one of the most stupendous frauds ever perpetrated. But your Aunt Jennie must not fret over it. I still have a home and as long as I live she shall enjoy it as a matter of right; at least until she recovers what she has lost. Fred is young, active, honest and intelligent, and will work with a vim to recuperate his losses. Of course his first effort will be to repay his aunts."

White-capped waves and the black trough between! Outwardly, as always, Grant gave no indication that he understood the public scorn and pity, which was worse to a man of his mold. But the heart-sick veteran came to a decision. He decided to make money in the only way left.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Man Proposes

§ 1

IN 1885 the writing of memoirs was not the commonplace practice it has become. There were no syndicates. "Ghost" writers were in the shadow of the future, and no Pulitzer prizes had been awarded to recording generals. In the autumn of 1870 President Robert E. Lee of the Washington and Lee University had collapsed after a vestry meeting and died two weeks later without contributing the rich war history he might have written, and leaving a gap which patient investigators have endeavored to overcome with almost generations of labor, culminating in Douglas Southall Freeman's monumental volumes.

The Century Magazine, which in the 1880's occupied a unique position in the magazine field of that day, had tried to persuade Grant to contribute to their papers on the Civil War. Richard Watson Gilder, poet, editor and contact man for the Century Company, but above all, vibrant human being,¹ had tried to whittle away the General's distaste. Grant was adamant. He was a soldier, not a writing man. At one time Sherman had refused to do anything unless Grant did. Later Grant said, "It is all in Badeau," referring to the book by his friend General Adam Badeau, who started as a military Boswell—a

¹*Letters of Richard Watson Gilder*, edited by Rosamond Gilder.

Man Proposes

stilted one to be sure—and ended, they say, by sending a huge bill to the Grant family.

The jolt which was so often necessary to throw Grant's gears into mesh came with the failure of the banking house, in addition to the bad repute into which the General's name had once more fallen, and the fact that the war hero had literally *not the means to pay his household bills*. A stranger, called Charles Wood, of Lansingburg, N. Y., sent to him a check for \$1000² with a note asking "that this amount be accepted as a loan on account of my share for services ending in April, 1865."

The march of events had their effect. At this juncture Robert Underwood Johnson, then associate editor of the Century Company and in charge of its war series, wrote to Grant:

"The country looks with so much regret and sympathy upon General Grant's misfortune that it would gladly welcome the announcement and especially the publication of material relating to him or by him concerning a part of his honored career in which every one takes pride. It would be glad to have its attention diverted from his present troubles, and no doubt such diversion of his own mind would be welcome to him." To their great joy the Century people received not long thereafter a note indicating that the General was in the mood to surrender. Johnson's statement—"This is one of the fortunate experiences of my life, since it revealed to me the heroism and the integrity of a much misrepresented man"—not only shows the cloud under which

²Actually two installments of \$500 each.

Grant's Last Stand

Grant rested, but makes us slow to believe all we hear of public men.

On a beautiful day in early June Mr. Johnson went to Long Branch, N. J., where, on the porch of a lonely cottage, Grant stared solemnly at the sea. He had met the General casually at one or two public functions and had received the same impression as had others; that he was a man of iron self-control. Johnson was astonished that the General opened up his heart about the failure of Grant & Ward and seemed to indicate as a foundation for any new association the understanding that he, Grant, was in no way morally involved.

In a vase on her mantelpiece Mrs. Grant had kept a hoard of twenty dollar gold pieces which the General had received for attendance at directors' meetings. "Ward," said the General in a voice vibrant with scorn, "persuaded Mrs. Grant to invest these gold pieces." Grant told of the loan by Charles Wood—which he repaid at the close of the year with the Century Company's check for \$1000—as well as of a loan for a smaller amount by Mr. Romero, the Mexican Ambassador at Washington. At this meeting it was agreed that Grant was to receive \$2000 for four articles on the disputed battles of Shiloh, Vicksburg, and Lee's surrender, the battle of Chattanooga being afterwards substituted in place of the latter subject.

The first article turned out to be nothing more or less than an official report on Shiloh, and the editors were sunk. Summoning "all the tact I could muster," Johnson again called at Long Branch and questioned Grant about various phases on the now threadbare subject of Shiloh.

Man Proposes

"General," asked Johnson, "you know of course that you have been criticized for not having intrenched against Albert Sidney Johnston at Shiloh; is this true?"

"Yes," admitted Grant, "at that stage of the war we had not yet learned to intrench." Johnson now inquired about other details: how the General felt at this juncture, where General Buell was at such and such a time; how Grant in a pouring rain after the first day's fight had gone for shelter into an improvised military hospital.

An admission by General Grant: "But I couldn't stand the amputations, and had to go out in the rain and sit for the most of the night against a tree." Johnson, skilful reporter, first of the ghost writers, covertly taking notes. The article expanded. The circulation of *The Century* increased by 50,000 and Grant, now in full fling, enjoyed the writing, permitted himself those little asides, those personal, human touches which pierce—like streaks of sunset hue breaking through a cloud of thunder—the dark barrage of battle facts.

§ 2

Grant fought it out all the summer of 1884; and all of the winter, and most of the next summer. Usually he dictated. When his voice gave out he wrote in pencil. He said to Mr. Johnson, "I am keeping at it every day and night, and Sundays." At one time Frederick Grant said his father had spoken of Mr. Johnson as his "literary tutor." Grant even considered preparing a paper on the proposal that the Presidential term should be extended to six years—presumably advocating it.³

³*Remembered Yesterdays*, by R. U. Johnson.

Grant's Last Stand

In a letter dated July 15 he wrote to the Century people:

I have now been writing on the Vicksburg Campaign two weeks, Sundays and all, averaging more than four hours a day. Only now approaching Champion Hill, I fear my article will be longer than you want . . .

Will you be kind enough to inform me whether you would prefer having it confined within a certain space in *The Century*; and also whether, in the Wilderness battle, you wish only from the Rapidan⁴ to Spottsylvania (*sic*), or whether you mean by the Wilderness the whole campaign north of the James River. If the latter I fear I will have to strike; not for higher wages; but because I do not want to do so much work just now.

When the proof is returned to me I shall want to add probably as much as a page of your journal to Shiloh.

Very truly yours,
U. S. GRANT.

A copy of the Shiloh article was sent to General Badeau who, according to Johnson, made a few single-word corrections of no importance, such as changing "received" for "got"—by no means, comments Johnson, an improvement of Grant's Saxon style. Later there were insinuations, which Badeau seems to have fanned, that Badeau was in large measure the author. A note in my possession in General Grant's handwriting, which will be reproduced in full in its proper place, scotches such pretensions once and for all. It reads in part:

I first wanted so many days to work on my book so the authorship would be clearly mine.

⁴In the letter to Johnson Grant spells it "Rapid Ann" River, apparently so-called in those days.

Man Proposes

In August, 1884, Johnson reverted to the subject of expanding the articles into a book. Roswell Smith, president of the Century Company, came to Long Branch, where they lunched with the General's friend, George W. Childs. Later they went over to the Grant cottage. They sat on the verandah. Grant did not whittle in those days; for many years he had touched no stimulants, but he had a habit of looking out to sea. Then:

The General said naïvely, for he was entirely free from affectation: "Do you really think any one would be interested in a book by me?"

Mr. Smith replied:

"General, do you not think the public would read with avidity Napoleon's personal account of his battles?"

Then and there the *Memoirs* seem to have been agreed upon: the last fight and the best was in prospect; and for Ulysses Grant, death in action was decreed.

CHAPTER XXXIV

John Hancock Douglas, M.D.

§ 1

FINANCIAL disaster; a fatal illness; a gigantic task in untried fields: this momentous trio walked abreast before the man whose path had seldom lain among the pleasant places. How strange it is that some men may circle the entire globe from Tien Tsien to Timbuctoo, yet walk within a leaden groove—while others, moving only from the table to the hearth, appear to sift adventure from the very molecules of air.

No sooner had Grant in the spring of 1884 set to work on the Shiloh article—his first experiment in the literary field—and long before he contemplated the book, than he had noticed occasional contractual pains in his throat. Within three weeks of the failure of Grant & Ward he had “observed upon eating fruit, that his throat was sore, and that peaches particularly, of which he was very fond, gave him great trouble.”¹ His Spartan training, however, prevented more than casual references until the contractual soreness reached the dimension of stabbing pains.

But Mrs. Grant saw through the armor of her General’s reserve and persuaded him to consult Doctor Da Costa of Philadelphia, who advised the General to see his general practitioner in New York (Doctor Fordyce

¹*Diary of J. H. Douglas.*

John Hancock Douglas, M.D.

Barker) who, presently at Grant's request, sent him to Doctor Douglas. But Doctor Barker was absent in Europe *until the middle of October* and thus, by observing the medical proprieties the fatal disease received a head start of twelve weeks!

Doctor Douglas had succeeded his brother-in-law, the late Doctor Horace Green² (President of the N. Y. Medical Society and inventor of the throat instrument known as the probang), as the leading throat specialist of the city. Douglas was Scotch-American to the marrow. Vol. I, page 1 of Grant's *Memoirs* reads, "My family is American, and has been for generations, in all its branches, direct and collateral." Douglas had taken care of General Rawlins throughout the latter's fatal consumption; Douglas had been associate Secretary of the United States Sanitary Commission throughout the Civil War—his war letters are worth a book in themselves; he had met Grant at Fort Donelson before the latter became a national figure; looked at him with an admiration which grew with his growth, and strengthened with his strength until it had reached the point of devotion, "when he entered my office as a patient . . . on Oct. 22, 1884." Why then, could not Grant have gone to Douglas at once? My medical ancestors will not thank me for criticizing the well-known rules of professional etiquette. Perhaps a clue is given by Col. U. S. Grant III, who told the writer that his grandfather was very particular as to the proprieties, especially where the feelings of other people were concerned.

Another quality which Douglas shared with Grant, as

²The author's grandfather.

Grant's Last Stand

evidenced throughout the Douglas diary, was accuracy. Doctor Douglas had been appointed Associate Secretary of the U. S. Sanitary Commission on September 16, 1861. As a volunteer he had already attended the wounded at Bull Run; had inspected the camp of the 79th New York Regiment; had been on hand at the repulse at Bull's Bluff, Md., and other places. He was later sent to superintend the operations of the Sanitary Commission west of the Mississippi River with headquarters at St. Louis. After the battle of Fort Donelson Douglas reported to the officer in command whose headquarters was the cabin of a steamboat at Dover, in the Cumberland River just south of the Fort: "At this first meeting [with Grant] I observed the quiet, unobtrusive, reserved manner, as well as the quickness of observation and alertness of perception which distinguished him. I often thereafter spoke of these early impressions." In a footnote to the diary, which was later typed, but never printed, "it seems to me that more particulars might be given of this first meeting with Grant." The good doctor, for he was a doctor first and last, did not live to do so.

Douglas at the bombardment of Island No. 10; Douglas at the battle of Antietam; Douglas and his auxiliary service at Shiloh; Douglas converting vacant barracks into "Soldiers' Homes of Rest"; Douglas's opinions on Halleck, and McClellan and Lincoln; Douglas raising a rumpus when his sick supplies are misused; Douglas in yeoman service after Fredericksburg; Douglas as Sanitary Officer in-charge-upon-the-ground at Gettysburg; Douglas at the battle of the Wilderness: Douglas with his



Courtesy of Harriet Sheldon Douglas

John Hancock Douglas, M.D.



Courtesy of Harriet Sheldon Douglas

June 19, 1885, at Mt. McGregor

Back Row: (Mrs.) Nellie Grant Sartoris, General Grant, Doctor Douglas, Colonel Fred Grant (with top hat).
Sitting: Mrs. Jesse Root Grant, Jesse, her daughter; Julia and U. S. Grant, 3rd (children of Colonel Fred Grant).

John Hancock Douglas, M.D.

reports, and his invoices, and his bandages, his antiscorbutics, and his shiploads of barrels of sauerkraut and pickles—all these fall beyond the barricades of the present book.

All except the sauerkraut and pickles. Those items are important; for, strange as it may seem, it appears to have been a top current of vinegar in the conscientious doctor's make-up which first attracted an undercurrent humor in the Western general's quiet, but observant, soul.

The doctor's account is methodical, not to say meticulous.

When the 6th Corps, under Genl. Wright, was ordered to the Shenandoah Valley, I had several barrels of sauerkraut unheaded; and as the men defiled to board the transports which were to carry them to Washington on their way to the Valley, they were told to fill their cups with the kraut as they passed. This was at the same time that the ration was served to the army, so that this corps received its share while en route.

Another entry:

In the steamer *Kent* we continued following the course of this campaign (the bottling up of Petersburg) until we reached City Point, on the James. On our way we found . . . a schooner laden with antiscorbutics . . . and soon after we distributed these supplies to the men in the trenches in front of Petersburg.

The subsequent arrival of an ocean steamer from New York, freighted with articles of a similar character, provided more abundant supplies, requiring immediate distribution, than my means of transportation could handle with promptitude.

I went to headquarters, and had an interview with General Grant, stating my mission, and presenting an invoice of the

Grant's Last Stand

ship's cargo. He sent for the Quartermaster of his Staff, and in a few moments the transportation of the army and its machinery were applied to this work. By night-fall of the next day, the cargo of that ocean steamer was distributed very generally through the army.

I recall distinctly, the very pleasant reception and the almost playful manner with which the General answered me, when I read off the number of barrels of sauerkraut and pickles comprised in this cargo.

"We have a pretty large family here," he said, "and a good many mouths to fill. That, however, will soon be disposed of."

There is ample evidence, if such were necessary, to check the time-worn diary of the double-breasted Douglas. For it will be recalled that General Horace Porter, whom perhaps the Doctor never saw, particularly stated that Grant's breakfast on the morning of the Battle of the Wilderness consisted of a cup of coffee and *a large pickle*, "which he sliced with his own knife."

At all events, who can blame the General, as a surcease from his burdens, if he "playfully" caused the Doctor to check, re-check, and double-check his precious cargo of unheaded sauerkraut?

§ 2

On the morning of October 22, 1884, four months after the throat soreness had first been noticed at Long Branch, General Grant walked into the office of Doctor Douglas, observing the proprieties by handing his army acquaintance a card from Doctor Fordyce Barker. Still holding the card in his hand Douglas asked:

"In what way can I be of service?"

John Hancock Douglas, M.D.

The General told him of the difficulty in swallowing certain substances. He told Doctor Douglas that after graduating from West Point he had a continuous cough which gave some anxiety, but that a life on the plains soon dispelled it. The family history was one of longevity. He told of severe headaches at more or less regular intervals and of the accident the night of Christmas 1883 when he fell on the pavement in front of his door. "There was a halt in his step, as though one leg was shorter than the other." The accident was attended by severe pain, "confinement in bed . . . a slight attack of pleuro-pneumonia and general feebleness, from which he gradually rallied until May, when other disasters (the Grant-Ward failure) gave a shock to his recuperative powers from which he never recovered."

Making a local examination, Douglas found the velum inflamed, of a "dark, deep congestive hue, a scaly squamus inflammation, strongly suggestive of serious epithelial trouble." The tongue was somewhat rigid at the base on the right side.

When the doctor had finished this preliminary examination, the result was probably depicted in his face, and the first and only question Grant asked of him was,

"Is it cancer?"

"The question having been asked," says Doctor Douglas, "I could give no uncertain, hesitating reply. I gave that which I believed, qualified with a hope. . . . I realized that if he once found that I had deceived him, I could never reinstate myself in his good opinion. I said, 'General, the disease is serious, epithelial in character, and sometimes capable of being cured.'"

Grant's Last Stand

The next day General Grant came again, at the same hour, attended by his ever-present shadow, the colored servant Harrison.

Details of the local treatment which Douglas immediately ordered—for lessening congestion of the velum, for prophylaxis, and removing odors from ulcerated surfaces—have place only in a medical discussion. The doctor was specific as to the harm which could be done by irritating applications. He pointed out to Mrs. Grant, who called a few days later with the son, Frederick, the probable course of the disease with its varying steps of depression and hope. He says that no family ever carried out injunctions more strictly, or gave care more devotedly.

The doctor soon confirmed one fact which he had suspected from his earlier knowledge of the patient: that Grant's adamant exterior took its toll of inner strength. The imperturbable manner was what today would be called a defense mechanism. He believed the disease inherent, but augmented by the shock of Grant & Ward's failure and the General's stress of mind.

During October and November the congestion diminished and the General's literary efforts went forward apace.

CHAPTER XXXV

Mark Twain as a Publisher

MARK TWAIN, fresh from the triumph of *Huckleberry Finn*, had been lecturing in Chickering Hall one evening in November, 1884. Coming out of the darkness he heard Gilder of the Century say to some one:

“Do you know General Grant has actually determined to write and publish his memoirs? He said so today in so many words.” Mark Twain, who had recently published *Huckleberry* as a subscription book proposition through his own publishing house, Webster & Company of Hartford, pricked up his ears. He joined Gilder who, according to Mark Twain’s later statement, declared that in view of his financial distress, Grant was “gladdened” by the promised payment of \$500 for each of three articles on disputed battles of the war—in fact had decided to continue until a book was the outcome, though the latter question was not settled.¹ Gilder added, according to Mark Twain, that it had been hard to get Grant started writing, but now it was hard to stop him.

Next morning Clemens called at 3 East 66th Street to

¹If Gilder knew that Mark Twain was a publisher, doesn’t it seem strange that he would communicate to a possible rival the status *and proposed terms* of a contract not yet signed?

Grant's Last Stand

"smoke a cigar"² with Grant. He said to the General in substance:

"General, if, as I have heard, you are writing a book I hope you make a good sum for yourself and family. As a friend do you mind showing me the proposed contract?"

The General thought there was no harm in that.

Mark Twain discovered that the publishers had offered a straight 10 per cent royalty without any advance payment; that they anticipated, *but would not guarantee* a sale of 25,000 copies. Mark Twain stormed. He said no man in his senses would sign such a contract, and that people who knew what they were about would not offer it. Then and there he offered to draw a check for \$25,000 as advance royalty for the first volume of the memoirs alone, and to add \$25,000 royalty for the second volume and a like amount for any other volumes. Grant was impressed, as he always was by large figures; but he was also distressed at the idea of not giving the book to the people who had first suggested it.

"In that case," said Clemens, "it belongs to me, for you will recall that long ago I urged you to write your memoirs."

Mark Twain later wrote in his effervescent way:

The thing that astounded me was that . . . it never seemed to occur to him (*the Century* editor) that to offer General Grant five hundred dollars for a magazine article was not only the monumental injustice of the nineteenth century, but of all centuries. He ought to have known that if he had given General

²Clemens must have done the smoking. Grant had been asked to refrain from the cigar at about this time.

Mark Twain as a Publisher

Grant a check for ten thousand dollars, the sum would still have been trivial; that if he had paid him twenty thousand dollars for a single article, the sum would still have been inadequate, that if he had paid him thirty thousand dollars for a single magazine war article, it still could not be called paid for; that if he had given him forty thousand dollars for a single magazine article, he would still be in General Grant's debt.

All those familiar with Mark Twain's exuberant style will recognize the above as his way of driving home a point. Mr. Johnson says that "Mr. Albert Bigelow Paine's account in *The Life of Mark Twain* of how the book came to be given to Mr. Clemens's firm leaves something to be desired"; certain it is that in the free-for-all battle of books known as publishing, as well as in other activities, part of Mark Twain's success (and charm) lay in the fact that he was an *enfant terrible*. To the Century people it is only fair to add that whereas Mark Twain's enthusiasm carried his publishing house to bankruptcy within a few years, *The Century* went on until its amalgamation half a century later. Privately, Johnson thought it regrettable that another should have "plowed with our heifer." In spite of that disappointment the Century people were dignified. They wished Grant luck and allowed him to use the magazine material for the book. At a later time Colonel Fred Grant wrote in regard to voluntary additional payment for the articles:

... Will you say to Mr. Smith that Father was much affected by the letter which brought the check. Father's connection with *The Century Magazine* has been pleasant, and he feels gratified in having done business with men who have always acted the

Grant's Last Stand

part of gentlemen. You have been generous, and if in the future I am able to do anything for your interest you will find me acting with you.

With one bidder acting fairly, but conservatively, the other acting exuberantly, both from his own and the author's point of view, the outcome can be foreseen. The contract with Mark Twain was signed February 27, 1885. Mark Twain's swift intuition had envisioned at once the magnitude of the proposition; his swift enthusiasm, backed by the persuasive sound of guaranteed royalty, was a tremendous stimulus. Entirely aside from the alleged steal of the book (the most talked of publishing coup prior to George H. Doran's capture of *Lawrence of Arabia* from under the guns of the late F. N. Doubleday), the result was fortunate for both parties and for the public. Here were two typical Americans of their day, one a military, the other a literary leader, both of humble beginnings, both transplanted from the West, exerting great influence upon each other. Twain's electric influence on Grant is obvious. Grant's struggle under burden of desperate health to fight his way out of bankruptcy had a subsequent effect upon Mark Twain which has never been recorded. Years later Clemens's publishing company went into receivership: Clemens's self-imposed exile abroad and the three (perhaps four books) subsequent to *Huckleberry Finn* were produced in the quixotic fight to pay his creditors to the last degree. Grant's example was before him.

On February 21, six days before the book publishing contract was signed with Mark Twain's firm, the buoyant, bristling humorist called on the gentle man of war.

Mark Twain as a Publisher

Strange pair they must have seemed, the outer man in each case belying his profession. Clemens left a memorandum record of the visit. So often has General Grant's credulity been discussed, and his business ability questioned, that it is wise for us to adjust our eyesight by looking through the lenses of Mark Twain's vivid glass:

The physician present was Doctor Douglas,³ and upon Clemens assuming that the General's trouble was probably due to smoking, also that it was a warning to those who smoked to excess, himself included, Doctor Douglas said that General Grant's affliction could not be attributed altogether to smoking, but far more to his distress of mind, his year-long depression of spirit, the grief of his financial disaster. Doctor Douglas's remark started General Grant upon the subject of his connection with Ward, which he discussed with great freedom and apparent relief of mind. Never at any time did he betray any resentment toward Ward, but characterized him as one might an offending child. He spoke as a man who has been deeply wronged and humiliated and betrayed, but without a venomous expression or one with revengeful nature. Clemens confessed in his notes that all the time he himself was "inwardly boiling—scalping Ward —flaying him alive—breaking him on the wheel—pounding him to a jelly."

While he was talking Colonel Grant said:

"Father is letting you see that the Grant family are a pack of fools, Mr. Clemens."

The General objected to this statement. He said that the facts could be produced which would show that when Ward laid siege to a man he was pretty certain to turn out to be a fool; as much of a fool as any of the Grant family. He said that nobody could call the president of the Erie Railroad a fool, yet Ward had beguiled him of eight hundred thousand dollars, robbed him of every cent of it.

³*Mark Twain—A Biography*, by Albert B. Paine.

Grant's Last Stand

He cited another man that no one could call a fool who had invested in Ward to the extent of half a million. He went on to recall many such cases.

After these friendly calls Grant would turn toward the work table, his literary batteries recharged.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Writing Against Time

§ 1

AS THE work on the *Memoirs* progressed, Grant seems to have used his friend Doctor Douglas as a sounding board. One of the notes is a memorandum to the Doctor quoted in an earlier chapter:

I have been writing up my views of some of our generals, and of the character of Lincoln and Stanton. I do not place Stanton as high as some people do. Mr. Lincoln cannot be extolled too highly.

On that day he also wrote in the *Memoirs*:

There is no great difference of opinion now, in the public mind, as to the characteristics of the President. With Mr. Stanton the case is different. They were the very opposite of each other in almost every particular, except that each possessed great ability. Mr. Lincoln gained influence over men by making them feel that it was a pleasure to serve him. He preferred yielding his own wish to gratify others, rather than to insist upon having his own way . . . In matters of public duty, however, he had what he wished, but in the least offensive way. Mr. Stanton, never questioned his own authority to command, unless resisted. He cared nothing for the feeling of others. In fact it seemed to be pleasanter to him to disappoint than to gratify. He felt no hesitation in assuming the functions of the

Grant's Last Stand

executive, or in acting without advising with him. If his act was not sustained, he would change it—if he saw the matter would be followed up until he did so.

Suffering brought out the gentleness and consideration of Grant's nature, buried, as it often was, under the man's heroic reticence. It might better be said that qualities already known to the family were now revealed to others who at this period came into more or less intimate contact: Mark Twain, Johnson, Roswell Smith, the Reverend Doctor Newman, Mr. Child, Mr. Drexel, who later lent him the cottage at Mt. McGregor, Doctor Douglas, and Doctor Shrady. During the winter at 3 East 66th Street he worked for the most part in a small study next his room where he would often sit for hours at a time at an extemporized movable table,¹ with folding legs. His style in writing was clear, terse, unadorned; his object was to unfold the facts rather than to embellish them; possibly the fear that his time was limited had some influence. There were occasional similes such as the one we have mentioned about the mountainsides covered with palms which toss to and fro in the wind like plumes in a helmet. He gave a good reporter's account of the review of the army in Washington at the end of the war, letting the recital of facts conjure a sight he summed up as "varied and grand." All in all no better description than Grant's has ever been given of Lee's surrender. His writing improved as he went on. The humor was not pronounced and lacked suppleness in

¹Later when at Mt. McGregor, Gen. Grant was given a lap-table which he enjoyed, writing to Doctor Douglas: "This is the first of the jim-cracks that has seemed to have real merit."

Writing Against Time

expression:² occasionally there was a droll twist, such as the description of how General Pope arranged "to cut loose as it were" from Halleck's careful oversight. His humor was more apt to crop out in conversation. For example, after the assassination of President Garfield, when the family were at Long Branch the General insisted that Mrs. Grant should move the entire family to New York and suggested the possibility of doing so within two days. Mrs. Grant said it was impossible. The General said:

"Well, I have moved at least twice that number of people in half the time."

One afternoon when his pain was on a vacation, so that he could talk freely, Grant told Doctor Shrady about an occasion years previously when he had walked in the rain to a reception given in his honor. A stranger joined him in the use of an umbrella.

"I have never seen Grant," said the stranger, "and I merely go to satisfy a personal curiosity. Between us I have always thought that Grant was a very much over-rated man."

"That's my view also," replied his umbrella companion.

Not long after the return from Long Branch was held an examination attended by the previously consulted doctors, together with Doctor Henry B. Sands and Doctor Barker. By January the General realized that recovery was impossible. Doctor Shrady says that, never

²"General Grant's Last Days," a paper by Doctor William A. Shrady, *Century Magazine*, Vol. 54.

Grant's Last Stand

openly demonstrative in any direction, he appeared the same under all conditions. When he was depressed he was simply silent; when he was cheerful he merely smiled. When the retirement, which would have restored his rank and would have placed him on the retired list of the army, failed to pass, he made no comment. But Douglas noted a consequent relapse. Later the bill was passed; Grant's ailment was then beyond help. Sometimes the patient struggled under such a weight of depression that he could not work. He did not complain, but stared at space as if it were a blank wall.

There came a time following the first rigid discipline — antiseptic applications, removal of certain molar teeth, fomentations applied to the right leg, and of course entire absence of smoking — that the General felt comparatively free from pain and worry. From his almost playful submission to orders none had realized how constant was his craving for tobacco.

"Doctor," he surprised Shrady by asking on that day, "do you think it would really harm me if I took a puff or two from a mild cigar?"

"There was something so pitiful in the request," Shrady adds, "and so little harm in the chance venture that consent was easily obtained."³

Shrady had neglected to pull down the shades. Reporters occupied every position across the way — one of them making love to a chambermaid whose outpost afforded a second-floor view. Later, when a large headline appeared "Grant Smokes Again," Mrs. Grant was

³Douglas as stated was in charge but had called in Shrady as consulting surgeon. Twenty years later Shrady wrote three "papers" in *The Century Magazine*. This was after Douglas's death. Douglas published nothing.

Writing Against Time

indignant at the report; but the conspirators, for reasons of their own, said nothing. Often groups would gather compelled by friendly or morbid interest, to contemplate the red brick front which housed the captive; at times, with arms behind his back, he would contemplate his audience with equal curiosity. After the nearly fatal relapse at the end of March when a large group of citizens of every class filled the street, and the General was told of their obvious friendship, he pondered for some moments. Then was written a famous message:⁴

I am very much touched and grateful for the (prayerful) sympathy and interest manifested in me by my friends—and by those who have not hitherto been regarded as my friends. I desire the goodwill of all, whether hitherto friends or not.

§ 2

Throughout the summer and back at 66th Street in the autumn, Grant had been hacking away, first at the articles, then at the book. Before winter the veteran's throat had become so troublesome that he amplified dictation with the pencil. Frederick Dent Grant, the eldest son, was of immense assistance and General Badeau helped in checking records.

By midwinter, 1885, the warrior had finished Volume I, 180,000 words, and was well along in Volume II,

⁴The message was dictated in two parts. Mrs. Grant recalled it and insisted that the word "prayerful" be inserted. In such matters, including the frequent prayers by Doctor Newman, Grant appears to have been guided by what would give comfort to others. In wordly matters Grant was a fatalist. His religious outlook, which there is no room to discuss here, obviously deepened with age.

Grant's Last Stand

which was to be of greater length; he worked faster now because recurring pains in the throat were faster. More friends began to inquire at the house. Mark Twain called on February 21, 1885, cheered because of a news item that the threatening symptoms had disappeared.

Grant said, "Yes, if the report were only true," and turned huskily to his dictating. He was surrounded by maps, diagrams, records of all sorts.

There is a little etching on the easel of Mark Twain's memory which fits into the picture at this point:⁵

Friday, March 20, 1885. Gerhardt and I arrived at General Grant's about 2:30 P. M. and I asked if the family would look at a small clay bust of the General which Gerhardt had made from a photograph. . . . Presently Mrs. Grant suggested that Gerhardt step in and look at the General. I had been in there talking with the General, but had never thought of asking him to let a stranger come in. So Gerhardt went in with the ladies and me, and the inspection and cross-fire began: "There, I was sure his nose was so and so, and, I was sure his forehead was so and so," and, "Don't you think his head is so and so?" And so everybody walked around and about the old hero, who lay half reclining in his easy chair, but well muffled up, and submitting to all this as serenely as if he were used to being served so. . . . A table for the bust was moved in front of him; the ladies left the room; I got a book; Gerhardt went to work; and for an hour there was perfect stillness, and for the first time during the day the General got a good, sound, peaceful nap. General Badeau came in, and probably interrupted that nap. He spoke out as strongly as the others concerning the great excellence of the likeness. He had some sheets of MS. in his hand, and said, "I've been reading what you wrote this morning, General, and it

⁵From Mark Twain's note book. Quoted by A. B. Paine in *Mark Twain: A Biography*.

Writing Against Time

is of the utmost value; it solves a riddle that has puzzled men's brains all these years and makes the thing clear and rational."

§ 3

It became painful to talk even in whispered tones. Doctor Douglas spent more and more time at the house; the General's difficulty with breathing became more pronounced and the memoranda more frequent. There are in my possession over 120 of them, not counting the letters, most of them jotted on faded yellow slips. One day when Doctor Douglas had been absent for some hours he returned to find his patient-author dozing in a sitting position, hands crossed on lap, feet upon the chair opposite. He wore a cap to lessen the neuralgia pains which on damp days were added to his unhappy cup. He handed the doctor a note which read:

If I live long enough I will become a sort of specialist in the use of certain medicines if not in the treatment of disease. It seems that man's destiny in this world is quite as much a mystery as it is likely to be in the next. I never thought of acquiring rank in the profession I was educated for; yet it came with two grades higher prefixed to the rank of General officer(s) for me. I certainly never had either ambition or taste for a political life; yet I was twice President of the United States. If any one had suggested the idea of my becoming an . . ." (the second page has been lost. Perhaps he was going to say "man of letters").⁶

By the spring of 1885 he was suffering hemorrhages and unspeakable pain, relieved only by cocaine and mor-

⁶The rest of this letter has now been found and is given in full on p. 16, Chap. III.

Grant's Last Stand

phine. Once in March, and again during a frightful hemorrhage one April night they thought him going, even to Mrs. Grant who heretofore had steadfastly refused to recognize the inevitable. This was the night when Doctor Newman baptized Grant and Douglas and Shrady stimulated the heart with brandy. But God must have heard Lincoln say, "I can't spare that man; he fights." The memoirs were not done.

§ 4

The Personal Memoirs of General Grant, in two volumes totaling 1231 pages and 295,000 words, brought to General Grant's family within the first two years after publication a royalty of \$450,000. The work was completed in about eleven months. Grant gave to the pages the last full measure, but did not live to see the fruits of his devotion. They are comparable with, but of greater interest than *Cæsar's Commentaries*. It has been said that the work reads "as if it had been written by a very sick man." This I cannot see. I had read the book perhaps half a dozen times before knowing the story of its creation. As has been shown, it reveals a retentive memory, a consequential mind, and a desire to sift fact from fancy. But of the pain which drenched its author there is no evidence. That is reserved for the yellow slips of paper.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Slips of Paper

SLOWLY, very slowly, the General pulled himself from the depths of that early April night when death had seemed a question of minutes.

His great fear was that he should choke to death. Hemorrhages relieved the congestion but weakened the patient. Drops of digitalis were given for the heart, solutions of cocaine applied to the throat, and when necessary, hypodermic injections. He could not live indefinitely on such a basis. On April 14 he was able to walk several times from his bedroom to his library and enjoyed the company of several members of his family. On April 20 he rode out in the park with Doctor Douglas. On April 23 "he drove out again with the ladies of his family." His weight was down to 146 pounds. He saw several friends on his birthday, April 27. Gradually he had come back to a semblance of physical strength: his mind and his purpose had remained clear and fixed throughout. That purpose was to live until the book was finished, not one day after that, the pain was too intense.

Grant wanted to heal the wounds of war. There is placed at the end of this *Memoir* a note in which Grant not only says farewell to Douglas, but reverts to the era of good feeling which he believed would ultimately spring up between the North and South. Grant seems to have been practising his thoughts upon the doctor, for

Grant's Last Stand

the idea is developed as follows in the final pages of the published *Personal Memoirs*:

I feel that we are on the eve of a new era, when there is to be great harmony between the Federal and Confederate. I cannot stay to be a living witness to the correctness of this prophecy; but I feel it within me that it is to be so. The universally kind feeling expressed for me at a time when it was supposed that each day would prove my last, seemed to me the beginning of the answer to "Let us have peace."

The expressions of these kindly feelings were not restricted to a section of the country, nor to a division of the people. They came from individual citizens of all nationalities; from all denominations—the Protestant, the Catholic, and the Jew; and from the various societies of the land—scientific, educational, religious, or otherwise. Politics did not enter into the matter at all. I am not egotist enough to suppose all this significance should be given because I was the object of it. But the war between the States was a very bloody and a very costly war. One side or the other had to yield principles they deemed dearer than life before it could be brought to an end. I commanded the whole of the mighty host engaged on the victorious side. I was, no matter whether deservedly so or not, a representative of that side of the controversy. It is a significant and gratifying fact that Confederates should have joined heartily in this spontaneous move. I hope the good feeling inaugurated may continue to the end.

Criticism of his physicians, especially if he thought it might upset them or worry Mrs. Grant, always aroused his loyalty. One afternoon the doctor was conscious that something had disturbed the General but could not divine the cause. Soon after, he showed the doctor a weekly paper in which the medical treatment to which he had been subjected was criticized. He thereupon

Slips of Paper

handed Douglas several slips of manuscript paper on which he had written in part as follows:

This paper (naming it) is a reformer in medicines. It is an advertising medium for quack medicines prepared by ignorant people. If I were left to their treatment, I would die within a few days, suffering the extremist agony in the meantime. I would not have entire faith in the four doctors attending me, unsupported by the judgment of anybody else. But they are all distinguished in their profession. They reject no treatment because it is not given at their own suggestion.

It is not true that they are experimenting on me with a single medicine about which they know little or nothing. It is not true that they are persisting in a single treatment. With every phase of the disease, they have varied the treatment. The medicine alluded to as the one being "experimented with" is, I presume, Cocaine. That has never been given as a medicine. It has only been administered as an application to stop pain. It is well known that it accomplishes that result without leaving injurious effects behind. It is only applied when much needed.

As to the treatment of Garfield [President Garfield, who had been shot] I knew nothing about that.

On May 10 Doctor Barker had been so much broken down by overwork that he considered it necessary to leave for Europe and came into say good-bye. The General "with marked evidence of suppressed emotion" expressed his appreciation of his long-continued professional friendship, said adieu, and added: "I suppose you never expect to see me again." "I hope I may," replied the doctor.

The General answered sadly, "You do not say 'expect,' but 'hope.' "

At about this time the question of moving the sufferer was discussed. Doctor Douglas favoring a high, dry

Grant's Last Stand

climate, if possible, observing that warm moist weather invariably weakened him, it was agreed by the family to accept the offer of placing at the General's disposal his cottage at Mount McGregor in the highlands. It was decided, conditions permitting, to make the trip on June 23—but the voice and general condition became at times so feeble that an earlier date was chosen.

Before me lies a memorandum dated June 23, 4:30 P.M., across the back of which is noted in Doctor Douglas's neat handwriting that it was written by Grant "after a day of comparative ease with several hours devoted to dictating in a whisper." It is not difficult to reconstruct the scene—the doctor undoubtedly returned to the sick room after an absence of a few hours, and asked the patient how he felt. The latter attempted to reply, but was unable to articulate the words. So he wrote on a slip of paper:

"I said I had been adding to my book and to my coffin. I presume every strain of the mind or body is one more nail in the coffin."

I said I had been
adding to my book and to my
coffin. I presume every strain
of the mind or body is one
more nail in the coffin.

June 23. 4:30 p.m

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Mount McGregor

§ 1

MOUNT McGREGOR, New York, a mountain village near Saratoga Springs, was in those days a resort frequented for its crystal air. Here on the porch of a frame cottage well up the mountainside, sits a wan figure in an invalid's chair. A woollen cap, like that worn by skaters, is over his head, a shawl rests on his knees, and on the shawl a pad and pencil. The pencil is seldom still. The man worked, but seldom spoke.

Down the platform at Grand Central Station, they had carried him to the special train. A reporter must have gone along, for the following note appears in *Harper's Weekly* under date of June 27, 1885:

At station after station on the route knots of people were found gathered to wave greeting and godsend. At West Point he beckoned to Dr. Douglas and with a smile motioned toward the Military Academy . . . as though the sight were dear to him. Till the last outline of its surroundings had passed his gaze was fixed on the spot.

His gaze was fixed on West Point.

West Point of Spartan memories! West Point! where a phlegmatic Middle-Western farm lad, accustomed to wandering along the banks of the White Oak stream at

Grant's Last Stand

Georgetown, Ohio, had been suddenly moulded by the ramrod tactics of Winfield Scott, "Old Fuss and Feathers," as they called him, the precisest drillmaster of them all. West Point! where, in the comparatively monastic days of the class of 1843, the plebes had been aroused in winter at daybreak,¹ pulled out to roll-call and sent back to their bare rooms to sweep out for inspection and sit shivering for an hour's study period before breakfast. Where one can find in the records several references to Cadet Grant:—"Belt twisted"; "glove torn"; "shoes not polished on parade"; and worst of all, "not keeping dressed (which means in step) while marching to dinner";² West Point, maker of men—where Sherman and Sheridan, Schofield and Keyes, Howard and Hamilton, Strong and Boynton and "Benny" Havens, all of Grant's vintage, had received their imprint of early training; the same West Point where in Revolutionary days Benedict Arnold, hearing of Major André's capture, left the breakfast table, called for his horse and galloped away from the scene, but never from the memory, of his treachery. Where Edgar Allan Poe discovered that he was not cut out to be a soldier; where in later days Cadet Pershing struggled to, and did, become a great one; where in still later years, animated by the heritage of fight, Cadets Byrne and Sheridan³ were to lose their lives in intercollegiate contest.

Did Grant on that day recall the kindly dressing down

¹For the best record of "West Point" at this time read General Charles King's affectionate chapter in *The True U. S. Grant*.

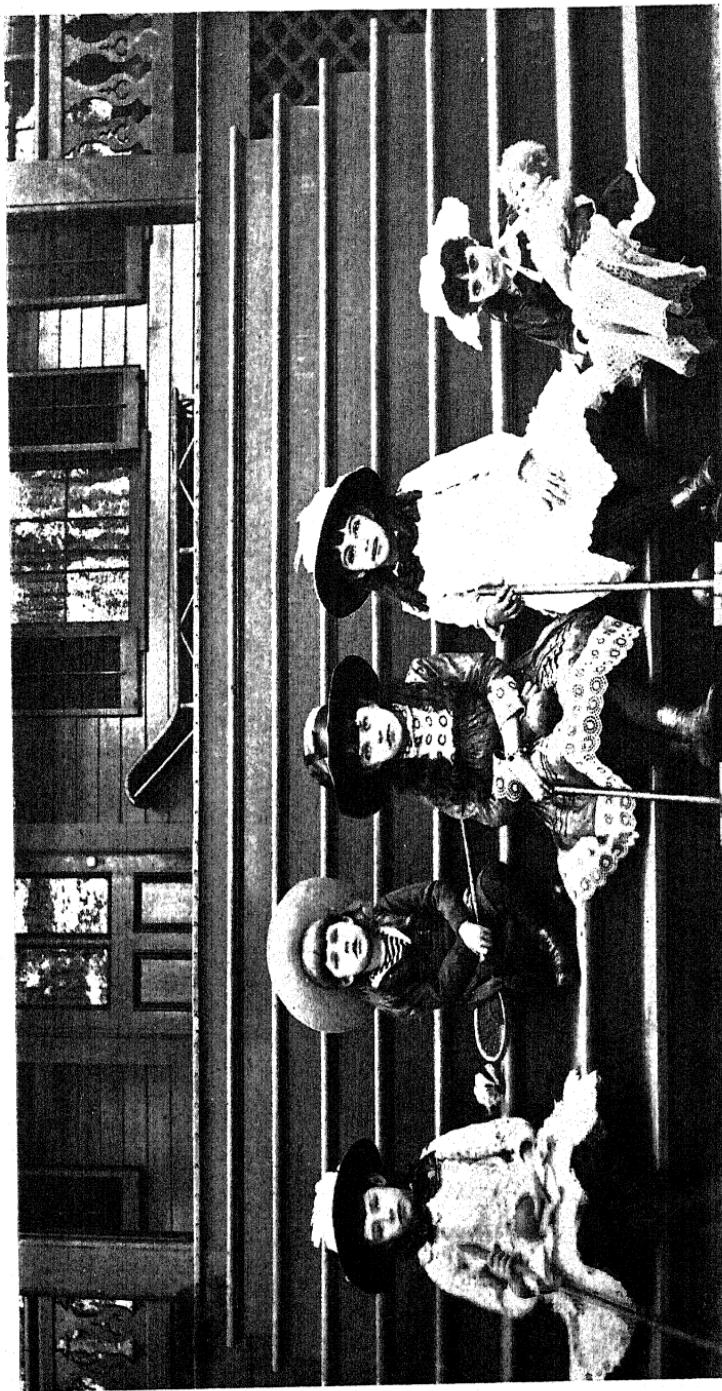
²*Ibid.*

³E. A. Byrne broke his neck playing against Hamilton Fish's Harvard eleven in 1910; Sheridan broke his neck playing left end against Yale some years later at New Haven.

Courtesy of Harriet Sheldon Douglas

At 4 A.M., July 12, 1885, Grant wrote to Doctor Douglas: "I notice that your little girls and Julie get along very, very happily together,"

Left to Right: (1.) Harriet Sheldon Douglas, daughter of Doctor Douglas, (2.) U. S. Grant, 3rd (now Colonel Grant), grandson of General Grant, (3.) Josephine Cantaenzeno, granddaughter of General Grant, (4.) Nellie Douglas, daughter of Doctor Douglas, (5.) Nellie Grant, granddaughter of General Grant.





Courtesy of Harriet Sheldon Douglas

Last photograph. Three days before the end. Garrison, faithful shadow, is in the background

Mount McGregor

from Colonel Charles F. Smith, who later fought with him in Mexico and at the battle of Shiloh? Did he recall the gruff approval of the German drillmaster Hershberger, when he cleared the bar on the chestnut sorrel, old "York"? Or of his disappointment at not being made a professor of mathematics or of losing the appointment to the Dragoons?

We do not know what passed through his mind as the train steamed slowly along the Hudson River, at the point where granite cliffs are mirrored, and granite men are made. All we know is that:

"He beckoned to Doctor Douglas and motioned toward the Military Academy as though the sight (were) dear to him. Till the last outline of its surroundings had passed his gaze was fixed on the spot."⁴

§ 2

That the journey tired him can be seen from a revealing note written on June 17 to Doctor Douglas. The circumstances were these:

On his arrival on the 16th Grant slept well and long for the first time in weeks. On the afternoon of the 17th he sat for a long time alone and motionless on the verandah of the cottage apparently wrapt in deep thought. He suddenly determined to make a test of his strength by walking. Summoning his shadow, Harrison, he went down the piazza steps and up the incline toward the Hotel Balmoral. There he rested on a rustic bench, gazing thoughtfully over the valley toward the Schuyler-

⁴*Harper's Weekly*, June 27, 1885.

Grant's Last Stand

ville monument on the Revolutionary battlefield of Saratoga. "In the evening," states Doctor Douglas, "he handed me a folded paper, giving it to me quietly in a rather furtive manner. It was written upon a pad of yellow colored paper," and read as follows:

Dr., since coming to this beautiful climate, and getting a complete rest for about ten hours, I have watched my pains, and compared them with those of the past few weeks. I can feel plainly that my system is preparing for dissolution in three ways; one by hemorrhage; one by strangulation, and the third by exhaustion. The first and second are liable to come at any moment to relieve me of my earthly sufferings. The time of the arrival of the third can be computed with almost mathematical certainty. With an increase of daily food, I have fallen off in weight and strength very rapidly for the last two weeks. There cannot be hope of going far beyond this period. All my physicians, or any number of them can do for me now, is to make my burden of pain as light as possible. *I do not want any physician but yourself*, but I tell you, so that if you are unwilling to have me go without consultation with other professional men, you can send for them. I dread them however, knowing that it means another desperate effort to save me, and more suffering. (Italics are authors.)

As will be seen from a later note, he had still to write the revamped chapters on Appomattox, and as always, he rallied when work was to be done. He rallied enough to enjoy the nearness of his family, including Nellie Grant Sartoris, the married daughter, who had some time ago been summoned from abroad. He deeply appreciated evidence of esteem in the newspapers and was correspondingly irritated at reports which would alarm his family. He had calls from R. U. Johnson, from

Mr. Since coming to this beautiful
climate, and getting a complete
rest for about ten hours, I have
watched my pains and compared
them with those of the past few
weeks. I feel plainly that my
system is preparing for dissolution
in three ways; one by hemorrhage
by strangulation and the third by
exhaustion. The first and second are
 liable to come at any moment to
 relieve me of my earthly sorrows;
 the time for the arrival of the
 third cannot be computed
 with almost mathematical certainty.
 With an increase of daily food I have
 fallen off in weight and strength
 very rapidly for the last two weeks.
 There can not be a hope of going
 far beyond this time. All any
 physician, or any number of them

Grant's Last Stand

Mark Twain, from his friend, General Badeau, from General Buckner and from others.

"About a week before the end," writes Mr. Johnson, "at Colonel Grant's request I visited Mount McGregor to confer with him concerning our articles . . . but the Colonel arranged for me to see him [General Grant]. The General, fully dressed, sat on the piazza in the sun, wearing something over his head, like a skullcap, and wrapped in a plaid shawl, looking thinner than before, and with a patient, resigned expression, but not with a stricken look. As he could communicate only in writing I did the talking . . . merely conveying the sympathy of my associates and the assurance that we should gladly do anything we could for the success of the book in Mr. Clemens' hands, adjusting our (magazine) plans to his. He smiled faintly and bowed his acknowledgment, and as I rose gave me his hand. I could hardly keep back the tears as I made my farewell. . . . The story may well be taught in all our schools as a lesson of fortitude, patriotism, and magnanimity. . . ."

What pleased him most was the visit from General Simon Buckner, his contemporary at "The Point"; Buckner, who, when he was penniless on resigning from the army "lent" him money to return home; Buckner, who had surrendered to him Fort Donelson in spite of "the ungenerous and unchivalrous terms which you propose"; Buckner, who now made pilgrimage to Mount McGregor to offer a friendly enemy's last salute.

Grant wrote naïvely to the doctor, "Genl. Buckner—Fort Donelson will be here on the next train. He is coming up especially to pay his respects."

Mount McGregor

Another note written during this week reveals the General's still objective attitude:

I have tried to study the question of the use of cocaine as impartially as possible considering that I am the person affected by its use. The conclusion I have come to in my case is: taken properly it gives a wonderful amount of relief from pain. Gradually the parts near there when the medicine is applied become numb and partially paralised. (Spelling is the General's.) The feeling is unpleasant but not painful. Without the use of it the parts not affected with disease are pliable but of no use because their exercise moves the diseased parts and produces pain. When the medicine is being applied the tendency is to take more than there is any necessity and oftener. On the whole, my conclusion is to take it when it seems to be so much needed as it was at times yesterday. I will try to limit its use. This latter you know how hard it is to do.

CHAPTER XXXIX

General Grant's Last Stand

§ 1

THE beginning and end of all things human is in pain.

We must hurry; the rest of the story, the inevitable race, cuts like a knife. With as little comment as possible let the faded slips of paper be the bulletins of Grant's final victory. Across the back of the next one is noted that it was after several hours of revising and writing:

"I have now worked off all that I had notes of, ana which often kept me thinking at night. I will not push to make more notes for the present."

Apparently written at this time:

June 27: "I feel worse this A.M. on the whole than I have for some time. My mouth hurts me and cocaine ceases to give the relief it did. If its use can be curtailed however I hope it will soon have its effect again. I shall endeavor to rest again if I feel it possible."

Undated, but in an envelope with other slips dated June 28:

"I feel much relieved this morning. I had begun to feel that the work of getting my book together was making but slow progress. I find it about completed, and the work now to be done is mostly after it gets back in gallies (spelling is the General's). It can be sent to the printer

General Grant's Last Stand

faster than he is ready for it. There (are) from one hundred and fifty to two hundred pages more of it than I had intended. Will not cut out anything of interest. It is possible we may find a little repetition. The whole of that, however, is not likely to amount to many pages. Then, too, there is more likelihood of omission."

June 30, P.M. "It will probably take several days to see the effect of discontinuing the use of cocaine. It might then be used once a day, might it not? Say when I am retiring for the night. It is no trouble, however, to quit outright for the present."

June 30, P.M. "I see the *Times* man keeps up the character of his dispatches to the paper. They are quite as untrue as they would be if he described me as getting better from day to day. I think he might spare my family at least from reading such stuff." Another day: "I had that newspaper article, with a reply to write, to worry me. Mrs. Grant was very much excited on reading the article."

I see the *Times* man keeps up
the character of his dispatches
to the ~~Times~~ paper. They are
quite as untrue as they would
be if he described me as getting
better from day to day. I think
he might spare my family at
least from reading such
stuff

June 30. 10. m.

Grant's Last Stand

July 7, 6:30 A.M. "Something was said yesterday about Herbert A. Thomson's method of business and I was asked to observe. I know that he has been the subject of attack from the *Tribune*, but I do not know anything about the merits of the case."

July 1, 8 A.M. "I feel weak from my exertions last night in throwing up. Then since that I cannot help repeating two advertisements of the B. & O. Railroad when I am half awake. The houses in this part of Deer Park are advertised as a sure cure for Malaria, or the place is, signed by Robert Barrett, Pres. The other is that the water—I think—is a sure cure for catarrh, signed same. There may be no such advertisements, but I keep dreaming them all the same. It strikes me as a very sharp dodge for a gentleman to advertise his own wares in such a way. When you consider Barrett owns the water and buildings at the park; is Pres. of the road over which invalids must pass to get to the place and is a very large owner in the stock of the road, it strikes me as another instance of what a man will do for money."

July 6, 5 P.M. "The injection worked very well, and I hope at not too great a cost. The pain left me entirely so that it was an enjoyment to lay awake. I did get asleep, however, from the mere absence of pain, and woke up a short time before four. I then took my food, washed out my mouth and put in a little cocaine which went to the right spot the first time. I have felt no pain until within the last few minutes. I had not been out of my chair much over five minutes when I saw you coming up the hill. How is Mr. Drexel?"

Undated: "I know that what you are doing will be as

General Grant's Last Stand

likely to cure me as anything else. Nature is given a good opportunity to act and if a cure is possible it will develop itself. All the medical skill in America, including Dr. Brown, could not find a cure."

July 7, 11 A.M. "I have had a pleasant morning. When my throat commences to hurt it begins with a cough. I then clean it out, either coughing up the phlegm, gargling out or the use of the syringe. It is then the cocaine would come in. I feel the want of it very much. But by keeping quiet the pain diminishes and finally disappears entirely so long as the hypodermic remains."

July 8, 7 P.M. After writing on Mexican Expedition. "I must avoid such afternoons as this. We had company since four and I was writing all the time."

I must avoid such afternoons as this. We had company since four and I was writing all the time.

July 16, P.M. "I feel sorry at the prospect of living through the summer and fall in the condition I am in. I do not think I can, but I may. Except that I do not gather strength, I feel quite as well from day to day as I have done heretofore. But I am satisfied that I am losing strength. I feel it more in the inability to move about than in any other way, or rather in the lack of desire to try to move."

July 20, 2 A.M. "In making the summary of progress for the 19th of July, I stated that all the sores of the

Grant's Last Stand

mouth were still there; this is hardly correct. The palate is about well, and along the tongue considerably improved."

§ 2

At this stage there follow some of the most revealing notes from the man whom they called the "butcher" of Cold Harbor. In most cases the date is appended in Doctor Douglas's handwriting.

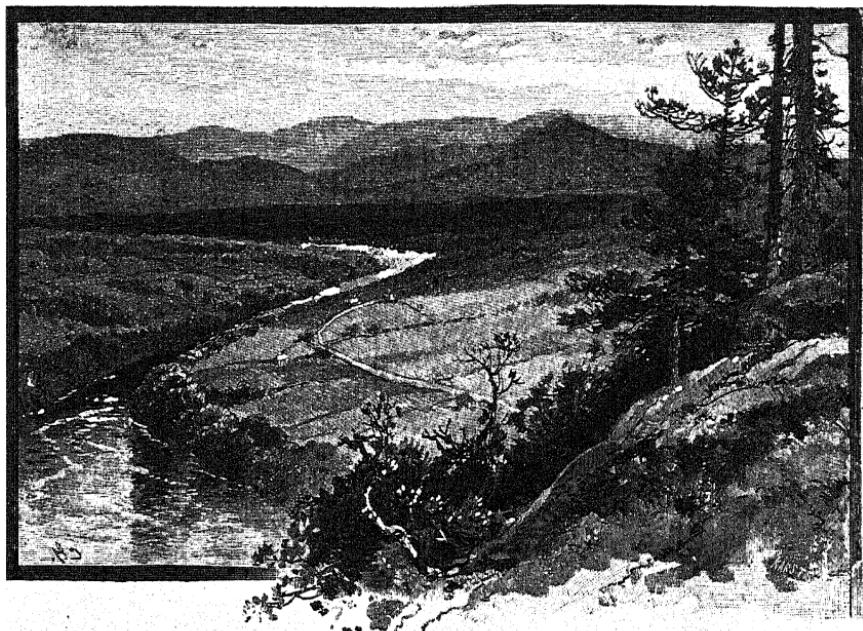
July 12, 4 A.M. "I notice that your little girls and Julie get along very happily together. With their swing, their lawn tennis and nice shade they seem very happy." June 29, P.M.: "Did I interrupt your game? I wrote four pages. I tore it off and have it. I must read up before I can write properly." July 6, 5 P.M.: "I am sorry you took the trouble to walk. You could have waited for the next train as well as not." Undated: "There was a week when I had but little acute pain. The newspapers gave that as a sure indication I was declining rapidly."

Undated: "The very money I shall give you this evening is the proceeds of a check sent to me by a broker saying that two friends of his had left the money with him to send to me to help in part pay doctor's bills. They do not want their names known, hence took that way of sending it." July 10, 11:30 A.M.: "General Buckner—Fort Donelson—will be here on the next train. He is coming up specially to pay his respects." June 30, 3 P.M.: "I think I will lay down and have my mouth cleaned. . . . I am always glad to see Mr. Drexel. But not being able to talk, it is not worth while for him to give himself trouble."



Courtesy of F. H. Meserve

General Grant at work on porch at Mt. McGregor
". . . A shawl rests on his knees, and on the shawl a pad and pencil"



"Framed a sloping vista of distant beauty." . . .
The view from which General Grant derived strength

General Grant's Last Stand

He had his jokes too:

"If Henry (the night nurse) can get me in bed . . . he has me just where he wants me." Another: "You must have been dreaming. I heard no rain fall and I was here all the time."

Another note with an attempt at cheerfulness:

"If that is the case do you not think it advisable for me to get up and rest as the tailor does when he is standing up?" Another: "I was going to say you always catch me at it when you go out and come in again. I have been asleep three times since you went out, and once made enough noise to propel a Hudson river boat."

Here is the note which perhaps prompted Doctor Douglas to keep the entire lot confidential:

"I will have to be careful about my writing. I see every person I give a piece of paper to puts it in his pocket. Some day they will be (coming?) up against my English."

July 11, 1 A.M.: "Not sleeping does not disturb me because I have had so much sleep. And then, too, I have been comparatively free from pain. I know a sick person cannot feel just as he would like to all the time; but I think it a duty to let the physician know from time to time just my feelings. It may benefit some other fellow-sufferer hereafter. Wake the Doctor [probably Doctor Shrady] up and advise with him whether anything should be done . . ."

About this time follow various pitiful little notes, over which it is best to draw the veil. They are objectively written, however, with the apparent purpose of helping the medical profession in future.

Grant's Last Stand

The following is important because it *predicts within one day the end of the Memoirs—and of their author:*

Buck has brought up the last of first vol. in print. In two weeks if they work hard they can have the second vol. copied ready to go to the printer. I will then feel that my work is done.

July 10

July 10, 11:30 A.M.: "Buck has brought up the last of first vol. in print. In two weeks if they work hard they can have the second vol. copied ready to go to the printer. *I will then feel that my work is done.*" (Italics are the writer's. He died in two weeks less one day.)

July 16, P.M.: "After all that, however, the disease is still there and must be fatal in the end. My life is precious, of course, to my family, and would be to me if I could recover entirely. There never was one more willing to go than I am. I know most people have first one thing and then another to fix up, and never get quite through. I first wanted so many days to work on my book so the authorship would be clearly mine. It was graciously granted to me, after being apparently much lower than since, and with a capacity to do more work than I ever did in the same time. My work had been

General Grant's Last Stand

done so hastily that much was left out and I did all of it over from the crossing of the Rapidan River in June/64 to Appomattox. Since then I have added as much as fifty pages to the book, I should think. There is nothing more I should do to it now, and therefore I am not likely to be more ready to go than at this moment."

After all that however the book
is still there and must be
published in the end. My life is
precious of course to my family
and world, but to see if I could
~~deserves nothing~~ never was one
man willing to go than I am.
I know most of people here
first one and then another will
try to fit us, and never get
quite through. This war partially
was cause. I first wanted so many
days to work on my book so the
authorship would be clear mine.
It was graciously granted to me;
after being apparently denied.

Letter in which General Grant says that the *Memoirs* are his own work; that he has finished; and that "there never was one more willing to go than I am."

Grant's Last Stand

§ 3

There has been reserved for the last a more formal letter, written earlier, and apparently mailed to Doctor Douglas on a temporary absence from the Mount McGregor cottage. It reads:

Dr.: I ask you not to show this to any one, unless physicians you consult with, until the end. Particularly I want it kept from my family. If known to any one, the papers will get it. It would only distress them almost beyond endurance to know it, and by reflex, would distress me.

I have not changed my mind materially since I wrote you before in the same strain. Now, however, I know that I gain in strength some days, but when I do go back it is beyond where I started to improve. I think the chances are very decidedly in favor of your being able to keep me alive until the change of weather towards the winter. Of course, there are contingencies that might arise at any time that would carry me off very suddenly. The most probable of these is choking. Under these circumstances life is not worth living. I am very thankful I have been spared this long because it has enabled me to practically complete the work in which I take so much interest. I cannot stir up strength enough to review it and make additions and subtractions that would suggest themselves to me, and I am not likely to, to any one else.

Under the above circumstances, I will be the happiest the more pain I can avoid. If there is to be any extraordinary cure, such as some people believe there is to be, it will develop itself. I would say therefore, to you and your colleagues, to make me as comfortable as you can. If it is within God's providence that I should go now, I am ready to obey His call without a murmur. I should prefer going now to enduring my present suffering for a single day without hope of recovery. As I have stated, I am thankful for the providential extension of my time

General Grant's Last Stand

to enable me to continue my work. I am further thankful, and in a much greater degree thankful, because it has enabled me to see for myself the happy harmony which has so suddenly sprung up between those engaged but a few short years in deadly conflict. It has been an inestimable blessing to me to hear the kind expression towards me in person from all parts of our country; from people of all nationalities, of all religions, and of no religion; of Confederate and National troops alike; of soldiers' organizations; of mechanical, scientific, religious and all other societies, embracing almost every citizen in the land. They have brought joy to my heart if they have not effected a cure. To you and your colleagues I acknowledge my indebtedness for having brought me through the valley of the shadow of death to enable me to witness these things.

U. S. GRANT.

Mt. McGregor, N. Y.
July 2nd, 1885.

§ 4

When, at last, that work had been completed which Grant called his only "legacy," the weary General asked that he should be carried to where he could "overlook the South view." At this spot an arbor of foliage on the mountainside framed a sloping vista of distant beauty. Here, for a long time, reclining in what he called his "bath chair," sat the writing warrior whose working day was done. This so far as can be ascertained is the last writing to Doctor Douglas in the latter's possession. He wrote a subsequent sentence to his son, Colonel Grant, who upon reading it answered, "That has already been attended to, Father." He also wrote a later note to Doctor Douglas, who, feeling certain it would be the last, from a feeling of delicacy, handed it, unopened, to the General's son.

Grant's Last Stand

On returning by another route from "the South view," it was found that the wheel-chair could not be rolled across a section of the path, and the General was forced to walk a few paces. On his return he was extremely pale.

Telegrams were sent to Ulysses Grant, Jr., and to the consulting physicians, Doctors Sands and Shrady.

The next day, July 21, toward the close of a hot, sultry afternoon, after he had moved about in restless search for ease, Mrs. Grant assisted him back to his chair. He sank languidly, letting the cane fall to the floor. Later, the pillows of the chair needing readjustment, the General rose, and stepping over to the cot near by, fell over it, weak and weary. As night came on, he seemed to revive for a moment and again tried to take food, but the effort was practically in vain.

For weeks he had slept in a chair; but on the evening of July 22 he signified that he wished to be laid upon the bed. All knew what that meant.

At 7 P.M., while Doctor Douglas was over at the hotel eating dinner, Harrison came for him saying the General had suddenly become weaker. "I hastened to the cottage and found that the General had been transferred from the chair in which a few moments before I had left him seated, to the bed, which had been hastily prepared for him, and was then lying on his back, a position I had not seen him occupy at any time during his sickness. . . . His pulse was much weaker and faster, and his weakness was evidently rapidly increasing.

"I immediately repeated the hypodermic of brandy, and waited. There was a slight revival, and in ten

General Grant's Last Stand

minutes I again repeated the hypodermic of brandy.

"Soon after this, both Doctor Sands and Doctor Shrady came down from the hotel, and we all recognized that the end was very near. Every one about the cottage remained up, expecting the end at any moment.

"As the hours drew on, the symptoms of dissolution grew. The respiration quickened, the pulse became small and very frequent, the limbs finally became cold, the respiration shallower and quicker, the pulse too frequent to be counted."

Occasionally during the night there were evidences of his appreciation of those about him. At one time he was asked if he was in pain, to which he distinctly answered "No."

Throughout the night Mrs. Grant sat near the head of the bed, at times touching a damp cloth to her husband's brow. For the most part she just sat there, holding the General's hand in hers, and seeming to search his face. The sons, Colonel Frederick Grant, Ulysses, Jr., and Jesse, were present, as were their wives at various times; and Nellie Grant Sartoris; only the grandchildren on the top floor slept through the vigil. From time to time the Colonel slipped an arm beneath his father's pillow. Once in answer to a question as to his comfort, the warrior murmured "So good"; at another time he is believed to have whispered "water." The pulse became faster, the breath scarcely perceptible.

On the last page, next to the crumbling cover of the doctor's time-worn diary, discovered a half a century later, is the last entry:

"The intellect remained unclouded and he had been

Grant's Last Stand

enabled to accomplish his great desire, the completion of his *Memoirs.*"

They loosened his clothing and found on it this note, addressed to his wife:

"Look after our dear children and direct them in the paths of rectitude. It would distress me far more to hear that one of them could depart from an honorable, upright and virtuous life than it would to know that they were prostrated on a bed of sickness from which they were never to arise alive. They have never given us any cause for alarm on this account, and I trust they never will. With these few injunctions and the knowledge I have of your love and affection and the dutiful affection of all our children, I bid you a final farewell, until we meet in another and, I trust, better world. You will find this on my person after my demise."

§ 5

It so happened that at times that night a clear, triumphant moon embraced all the wooded slopes of Mount McGregor, while reaching upward through shadows broken by the moon, each tall tree stood proudly like a sentinel outside the leader's tent. Toward morning of July 23, fog, creeping from the dark valley, surrounded the cottage. Just as the first rays of sunrise swept away the mists, the doctor stepped out to the brow of the hill — to that view which had often seemed to give the General new strength. Returning to take his place among the watchers he found the rhythm of the heart so irregular that the pulse could not be counted; gradually the respiration became shorter and even more shallow. There was no expiring sigh. At a moment before

General Grant's Last Stand

eight o'clock in the morning there seemed to be a pause in the breathing. They waited for a full minute; but the breathing was not resumed.

Slowly, at last the faithful Douglas rose from the watcher's chair and, observing that the spirit had already sheathed its sword, beckoned to the children to leave the room and close the door upon their mother. Over the soldier's granite features, inscrutable as always, now slowly settled a blanket of unending calm.

For a long time, silent and alone, Mrs. Grant knelt by the side of her General—for the last time victorious.

* * * * *

§ 6

A little more than half a century has passed since Ulysses Simpson Grant completed his last labors. During all those years he has remained the subject of more partisan discussion than is the lot of most men whose memory is exposed to history's uneven light. We cannot resist comparing him with Lee, a fruitless and ungracious task at best, since parallel lines, on separate mission bent, can never meet. A peaceful man, we quarrel over his acts; a gentle man, we think of him in terms of slaughter; a natural man, and like all natural products an enigma, we constantly demand that he explain himself.

Today—across the Hudson River from the Jersey Palisades, where slanting sun at evening used to cut deep tracings on suburban cliffs—now tarnished by the murk

Grant's Last Stand

of factory smoke—there stands a solid granite tomb. In front, beneath the ornate dome, its six Doric columns face southward toward the city's perpetual roar, protected from it by their perpetual request, "LET US HAVE PEACE." At times the plaza becomes an objective point of metropolitan parades for various causes; less often does the Atlantic Fleet steam home for holiday within its western view. For here the broad expanse of lower Hudson and the bay absorbs with ease the tangled skeins of river traffic; while to the north, in the shadow of Washington Bridge, the neighboring parks, which slope toward the water's drowsy edge, sleep—forever deaf to the whirr of wheels and dissonance of motor horns; forever unimpressed, while America's variegated young shout happily in their polyglotic tongue.

Within this tomb most people see an Ohio boy, who became America's outstanding leader of marching men. Others remember a President whose head was battered by the storms of the Reconstruction Era. For my own part I see these things well enough.

But in the shadow of the tomb I also see a wicker chair where sits a kindly but determined writing man, in suffering quite serene. A shawl rests on his knee; upon the shawl there is a pad, and in the man's hand a pencil, moving steadily. There are times when he pauses and leans back, with closed eyes, pain written deeply on his features.

After a while he straightens up; the far-away look becomes intent once more, and with an effort, the General resumes his writing.

INDEX

Alexander, General E. P., 148
Ammen, Jacob, 157
Appomattox, 32, 207, 231, 310
Army of the Cumberland, 71, 93, 105
Army of the James, 122, 183, 186, 192, 213
Army of the Mississippi, 66
Army of the Potomac, 115, 118, 119, 122,
 124, 128, 137, 138, 146, 148, 186, 192,
 195, 196, 197, 204, 205, 208, 234, 235
Army of the Tennessee, 57, 66, 67, 105,
 161
Arthur, Chester A., 269

Babcock, 218, 256
Badeau, General Adam, 65, 200, 240 n.,
 256, 274, 276, 280, 300, 312
Baird, General, 102
Banks, 74
Barker, Dr. Fordyce, 107, 108, 109, 283,
 286, 297, 305
Barlow, General, 139
Beauregard, General, 149
Belmont, 35, 37
Belmont, battle of, 38
Bernard, Montague, 252
Birney, General, 139
Black Friday Gold Conspiracy, 257 ff.
Boggs, Henry, 25
Booth, 230
Borie, Adolph E., 249, 255
Boutwell, George S., 249, 258
Bowers, 126, 129
Bragg, 91; position of forces, 97; at-
 tacked by Grant, 101; at Chattanooga,
 104; defeated, 105
Buchanan, Major Robert C., 21, 82, 85
Buckner, General Simon Bolivar, 22, 23,
 43 ff., 102, 312, 318
Buell, General, 53, 54, 56, 57, 279
Burnside, General A. E., 93, 94, 100, 101,
 105, 125, 127, 141, 155, 178
Butler, General, 122, 126, 149

Cæsar's Commentaries, 302
Cairo, District of, 37, 38
Cameron, Don, 265

Cedar Creek, Battle of, 158
Century Magazine, 36, 276, 279
Century Co., 106 n., 291
Chase, Secretary, 165
Chattanooga, 36, 91; position of, 97;
 attack on, 102 ff.; capture, 105, 114
Chickamauga, 91; Battle of, 93
Child, Mr., 296
Childs, George W., 281
City Point, Va., headquarters, 165
Clarendon, Lord, 251
Cleveland, Grover, 245, 263
Cold Harbor, 137, 142
Conkling, Roscoe, 265, 266
Coolidge, Calvin, 245, 263
Coolidge, Louis A., 74, 82 n., 94 n., 181,
 243, 247 n., 260
Corbin, Abel Rathbone, 257, 258
Corinth, capture of, 66
Corse, General, 162
Cox, J. D., 249
Creswell, A. J., 249
Cushing, Caleb, 252
Custer, General, 193, 213, 218

DaCosta, Dr., 3 n., 282
Dana, Charles A., 75, 77, 79, 83, 93, 94,
 136, 233 n.
Dana, Richard Henry, 116, 117
Davis, Bancroft, 252
Davis, Jefferson, 161, 166, 184, 205,
 232
Dent, Julia, 13, 14
Dent, 256
Department of the Missouri, 38
Devan, General, 193
Dinwiddie Court House, 197
District of West Tennessee, 47
Douglas, John Hancock, M.D., 9, 16, 37,
 47, 65, 107, 293, 302; diary of, 3 n., 106,
 108, 202, 203, 284, 285; diagnosis of
 illness, 76, 287; handling of crisis in ill-
 ness, 109 ff.; frequent visits, 301; de-
 fended by Grant, 305; account of
 Grant's death, 324 ff.
Drexel, 276, 316, 318

Index

Early, General, 125, 154
Essex, gunboat, 40
Evarts, William M., 252
Ewell, General, 125

Ferero, General, 155
Fish, James S., 7, 271
Fish, Hamilton, 249, 251, 252
Fisk, "Jim," 255, 257, 258, 259
Fisher's Hill, battle of, 158
Five Forks, battle of, 198-199
Foote, Admiral, 41
Forsythe, chief of staff, 195
Fort Donaldson, 5, 23, 35, 36, 43, 47, 48
Fort Heinrich, 39, 41
Fort Henry, 40, 41
Fort Sumter, 28
Fort Wood, 102
Freeman, Douglas Southall, 218 n.
Freeman, Robert Southall, 276
Frémont, Major-General, 38
Fry, James B., 13
Fuller, J. F. C., 131 n., 149 n.

Galena, Ill., 26, 27, 86
Galena Militia Co., 28
Garfield, J. B., 266, 267
Gerhardt, 300
Gettysburg, 112
Gibson Post, 72
Gilder, Richard Watson, 276, 289
Gordon, General J. B., 125, 184, 167
Gould, Jay, 6, 255, 257, 258, 259, 269
Grant, Frederick Dent, 65, 77, 78, 181,
 182, 270, 279, 288, 291, 293, 312, 323,
 325
Grant, Jesse Root, 181, 222, 229, 269, 325
Grant, Julia Dent, 74, 181, 182 n., 226,
 229, 255, 258, 259, 265, 269, 278, 288,
 298, 302, 315, 324, 325, 327
Grant, Ulysses Simpson, appearance, 3, 7,
 28, 115, 180, 270; at Spottsylvania, 140;
 at Lee's surrender, 217; during illness,
 307; successes and humiliations, 4 ff.;
 finances, 6 ff., 269; losses, 274, 275;
 memoirs of, 4 and n., 9, 10, 36, 37, 58,
 61, 65, 76, 93, 159, 276 ff., 299, 320, 321;
 sword of, 8; at West Point, 12, 13; at-
 tachment to Julia Dent, 13, 14; in-
 ability to turn back, 14, 15, 173; in
 Mexico, 18; obscure period, 19 ff., 24
 ff.; crossing of Isthmus, 20; drinking,

20, 22, 81 ff.; enforced resignation, 21;
 return to New York, 22; at "Hard
 Scrabble," 25; partnership with Boggs,
 25, 26; at Galena, 26 ff.; as drillmaster,
 28; letter to War Department, 29;
 ignored by McClellan, 29, 30; colonel
 of 21st Illinois Volunteers, 30; char-
 acter, when in command, 32 ff.;
 generous, 46; courageous, 56, 60, 180;
 political, 246 ff.; inability to influence
 others, 252; developed by illness, 296;
 baptism in fire and high command, 34;
 at Fort Donelson, 41 ff.; at Fort
 Henry, 40; surrender of Buckner, 44
 ff.; difficulty with Halleck, 48 ff.; at
 Shiloh, 52 ff., 58, 61; capture of Prentiss,
 57; disgrace, 61 ff.; aided by
 Sherman, 63, 64; command of armies
 of Mississippi and Tennessee, 66;
 Vicksburg campaign, 66 ff., 71, 72, 75;
 in memoirs, 76; breach with Mc-
 Lernard, 68; illness, 76, 93, 106 ff.,
 202, 203, 282 ff., 287, 296, 300, 314 ff.;
 encouragement of soldiers, 79, 80;
 analysis of Lincoln and Stanton, 89, 90;
 in command of Military Division of
 Mississippi, 91; conference with Stan-
 ton, 92; Chattanooga campaign, 93 ff.,
 97 ff.; lack of harmony among officers,
 94, 95; saluted by enemy, 97, 99;
 Chattanooga, engineering feat at, 101,
 102; attack, 102 ff.; final capture, 105;
 rebuffed by Congress, 107; baptised,
 110; made Lieutenant General, 113;
 letters to Sherman, 114; acceptance
 of commission, 117, 118; difficulty with
 Meade, 119; co-operation with ad-
 ministration, 120; military policy, 121,
 122; emotion, 128, 129; no ear for
 music, 135, 136, 234; courage, 56, 60,
 150, 298; first clinch with Lee, 123;
 confidence of new army gained, 123
 ff.; Battle of Wilderness begun, 126;
 coolness during, 127; march on Rich-
 mond begun, 130, 131; informal gram-
 mar, 135 n., 319; failure to reach
 Spottsylvania first, 138, 139; prisoners
 taken, 139; regrets for Cold Harbor,
 142; lack of moral support, 144; tribute
 to Lee, 145; plan to besiege Rich-
 mond, 145 ff.; crossing of James, 147
 ff.; outside Petersburg, 150; underes-

Index

timated, 150, 151; appreciation of Sherman, 151; compared to Lee, 154; tunnel under Confederate works, 156, 157; politically minded, 157; Shenandoah Valley campaign, 159; grip on Petersburg, 159; tribute to Sherman, 160; at City Point, 165; Southern Peace Delegation, 165 ff.; impatience with Thomas, 168; relations with Thomas, 169; smoking habits, 170, 171; habits during battle, 171 ff.; letter to Halleck, 174; calmness as compared to Hancock, 175; appreciation of scenery, 176; lack of appreciation of art, 176; meeting with Southern ladies, 177, 178; final campaign begun, 179; necessary decisions, 182, 183; Lee through lines, 183; meeting with Lincoln at City Point, 187 ff.; final plan to defeat Lee, 190 ff.; after Five Forks, 200; accuracy, 201 ff.; sleeplessness, 202; seizure of Petersburg, 204, 205; visit from Lincoln at Petersburg, 206; pursuit of Lee, 207 ff.; letters to Lee, 209 ff.; condition before Lee's surrender, 211; final encounter, 213; note of surrender received, 214, 215; surrender of Lee, 215; terms of surrender, 219; attempt on life, 227 ff.; difficulties with Johnson, 231 ff.; tact toward Sherman, 233; Grand Review, 235, 236; unsuited to politics, 238, 241; inaugural speech, 240, 241; Secretary of War, 241 ff.; contempt for Johnson, 244; theory of International Arbitration, 249, 254, 260, 261; Cabinet, 249, 250; attitude toward England, 250, 251; Treaty of Washington, 252; emnity for Sumner, 253, 254; settlement with England, 254; acceptance of gifts, 255 ff.; criticism of friends, 255; stock market panic, 255, 257; Black Friday Gold Conspiracy, 257 ff.; influenced by money, 259; defense of, 260, 261; abuse of, 263, 264; farewell message to Congress, 264; attempt at renomination for third term, 265 ff.; failure, 266 ff.; scheme to build railroad, 269; desire to make money, 269; connections with Ward, 271 ff.; decision to write complete book, 281; became patient of Dr. Douglas, 286, 287; contract with Mark Twain, 292; style in writing, 296; humor, 297, 319; recovery impossible, 297; bust made, 300; desire for harmony between North and South, 304; defense of Dr. Douglas, 305, 307; death imminent, 310; objective mind, 313; use of cocaine, 313, 314, 315; final letter to Douglas, 322; death, 324 ff.; final letter to Mrs. Grant, 326; tomb, 328

Grant, Ulysses S., Jr., 7, 8, 269, 271, 274, 324, 325

Grant, Colonel U. S., 3d, 217 n.

Grant and Ward, 7, 8, 270, 271, 273, 278, 288

Green, Dr. Horace, 283

Guatemala, 6

Halleck, General, 5, 38, 39, 40, 48, 49; actually in command, 61 ff., 66, 72, 85, 90, 91, 93, 119, 159, 174

Hamer, Congressman, 12

Hancock, General W. S., 125, 127, 139, 175

Harbord, Major-General, 260

Harper's Weekly, 5, 263, 264

Harris, Colonel Thomas, 33, 34

Herndon, William, 24

Hesseltine, William B., 85, 247, 257

Hill, General, 125

Hindenburg, 19, 24, 32, 99

Hoar, E. Rockwood, 249, 252

Hood, General, 161, 165, 168

Hooker, General, 95, 99, 103, 122

Hoover, Herbert, 245

Howard, General, 122

Humboldt Bay, 20

Humphreys, General, 204

Hunt, Henry J., 125

Hunter, General, 104, 155

Hurlburt, 67

Illinois Volunteers, 30

Ingalls, 218

Jackson, Andrew, 246, 263

Jackson, Stonewall, 86, 216

James River, crossing of, 147 ff.

Jefferson Barracks, 13

Jefferson, Thomas, 245

Johnson, Andrew, accession, 230; clashes with Grant, 231 ff.; attitude toward

Index

Southern states, 239; removal of Stanton, 241 ff.

Johnson, General, 102

Johnson, Robert Underwood, 3 n., 11, 58, 60, 277, 278, 279, 296, 310, 312

Johnson, General Joseph E., 55, 72, 122, 141, 161, 167, 232

Jones, George W., 269

King, General Charles A., 21, 22 n., 27, 31, 55, 67, 95, 126 n., 256

Kreuger, 259, 270

Lawler, General, 75

Ledlie, General, 156

Lee, Fitzhugh, 125, 197, 198

Lee, Robert E., 80, 112; surrender of, 15, 215 ff., compared to Grant, 121, 122, 154; by soldiers, 123; first clinch with Grant, 123; unbeaten, 125; soldiers fear of, 127, 128; at Spotsylvania, 139, 141; attitude toward Grant, 137, 138; at Cold Harbor, 141; morale high in South, 144; outguessed by Grant, 146, 148; held in Petersburg, 150, 159; defense of Petersburg, 153; counter-offensive up Shenandoah Valley, 154; breaks through lines, 183; evacuation of Petersburg, 204, 205; retreat, 207 ff.; letters to Grant, 209 ff.; final encounter, 213; note of surrender, 215; surrender, 215 ff.; appearance at surrender, 217; terms of surrender, 219; after surrender, 226; threatened with arrest, 231; death, 276

Lee, R. E., Jr., 137 n.

Lee, W. F., 125, 197, 198

Lincoln, Abraham, 19, 24, 27, 28, 66, 67, 69, 93; removes Grant from command, 61, 62; comment on Grant's drinking, 81; praised by Grant, 89, 90; attitude toward Grant, 114, 115, 179, 185; scheme of campaign, 119, 120; rebukes Meade, 124 n.; depression over election, 151; cypher to Grant, 158; reelection assured, 159; whimsical mind, 159; at City Point, 165; terms to end war, 166; humorous anecdotes, 166, 167, 206, 207; character, 187; meeting at City Point, 187 ff.; visit to Petersburg, 206; assassination, 188; news of, 228; results of, 230 ff.; attitude toward Southern states, 239; attitude toward Sumner, 253; abused, 263; described by Grant, 295

Logan, John A., 30, 265

Longstreet, General James, 18; at Chattanooga, 100, 101; aided by Buckner, 102, 125, 232

Lookout Mountain, 97

MacDonald, Sir John, 252

Mackay, John W., 6, 269

Marine Bank of Brooklyn, 7, 8, 271, 273

Markoe, Dr., 107

Marshall, 218, 221

McCormick, Robert, 30, 40, 55, 85, 95, 123

McClellan, George B., 29, 30, 38, 49, 50, 116, 119; candidate against Lincoln, 157

McClernand, General, 42, 52, 55

McLean, Major Wilmer, 215

McLernand, 66; character, 67; manner toward Grant, 68; relieved from command, 68, 69; described by Sherman, 80

McPherson, 67, 114; army of Tennessee, 161

Meade, General, 112, 118, 119, 131, 141, 149, 155, 183, 192, 205, 207; character, 124; rebuked by Lincoln, 124; at Battle of Wilderness, 126; exhaustion after battle, 136; review of army, 234, 235

Merritt, 218

Mexican Southern Railway, 269, 270

Military Division of the Mississippi, 91, 94, 115, 119

Missionary Ridge, 97

Moody, R. L., 27

Morris, Thomas, 12

Mothey, Ambassador T. Lothrop, 249, 251, 252

Napoleon, 105, 136

Nashville, Battle of, 169

Nelson, Samuel, 252

Newman, Rev. Dr., 110, 296, 302

New York Times, 6, 269

Northcote, Sir Stafford, 252

Opequon Creek, Battle of, 158

Orde, General, 204, 207, 208

Index

Paducah, 35, 37
Paine, Albert Bigelow, 291
Parke, General, 204
Parker, Colonel, 218, 221
Pease, C. E., 214
Pemberton, 72, 75
Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant, 4 n., 9, 10, 16, 17, 36, 37, 58, 61, 63, 74, 78, 89, 90, 107, 202, 203, 211, 217; progress of, 65, 236, 237, 300; character of, 77, 302; Vicksburg campaign, 76; order of writing, 138; plan to besiege Richmond, 146; Shenandoah Valley campaign, 159; Sherman's march to sea, 160 ff.; attitude toward politics, 238; account of Grand Review, 235, 236; begun, 276 ff.; first article, 278, 279; decision to write complete book, 281; financial returns, 302; completed, 320, 321
Petersburg, 159; evacuated, 204-205
Pickett, Major-General, 125, 197, 198
Pittsburg Landing, 52, 56, 62
Pleasants, Colonel, 155
Porter, Admiral, 70, 71
Porter, General Horace, 83, 115, 125, 126 n.; 127, 139, 170, 172, 175, 176, 195, 198, 200, 211, 212, 218, 221 n., 222 n., 256, 286
Prentiss, General, 55, 56, 85

Rawlins, General, 62, 68, 82, 86, 90, 91, 95, 96, 112, 123, 124, 128, 180, 195, 211, 212, 249, 283
Read, Buchanan, 199
Read, Colonel Theodore, 208
River Queen Conference, 166-167
Robinson, George B., 249
Romero, Mr. 268, 278
Roosevelt, Franklin D., 19, 246
Roosevelt, Theodore, 245
Rosecrans, General, 91, 92, 93
Rowley, 62

Sands, Dr. Harry B., 107, 297, 324, 325
Sartoris, Nellie Grant, 226, 310, 325
Schoffield, General, 122; Army of Ohio, 161, 168
Schurz, Carl, 253 n.
Scott, Winfield, 13, 308
Sedgwick, General John, 125, 127
Seward, 90

Shenandoah Valley, 150, 154; laid waste, 159
Sheridan, P. H., 99, 102, 119, 150, 153, 182, 192, 218; at Chattanooga, 104; in command of cavalry, 125; destroys railroads, 153, 154, 193, 194, 213; three great victories, 158; center of attention, 159, 160; pursuit of Lee, 207 ff.
Sherman, William T., 5, 50, 52, 55, 63, 64, 65, 67, 74, 78, 79; praise of Grant, 80, 94, 95, 100; at Chattanooga, 101, 103 ff.; letters to and from, 113, 114; promoted, 119, 122, 150; letter to Grant, 151, 152; march to sea appreciated by Grant, 160; pursuit of Johnston and Hood, 161, 162; line of communications severed, 163; reached Savannah, 164, 194; terms given Johnston, 232, 233; denounced by Johnson and Stanton, 233; review of army, 234; 235, 238; letter to Johnson, 244, 276
Shiloh, Battle of, 5, 36, 37, 51, 52 ff., 61, 114, 278
Shrady, Dr., 107, 108, 109, 296, 298 n., 302, 324, 325
Sigel, General, 126
Smith, Alfred, 245
Smith, Colonel Charles F., 38, 39, 48, 49, 50, 51, 309
Smith, Giles A., 102
Smith, Roswell, 281, 296
Smith, W. F., 149
Spottsylvania, 174
Spottsylvania Court House, 137, 138, 139
Stanton, Mr., 70, 71, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 119, 231; denounces Sherman, 233; removed from office, 241 ff.; described by Grant, 295-296
Stedman Fort, 183, 184, 186
Stephens, A. H., impressions of Grant, 165, 166, 167
Stewart, A. T., 249
St. Louis, 25, 26
Sumner, Charles, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254
Sword, Grant's, 8; Lee's, 218, 219

Tannenburg, Battle of, 32
Thomas, General, 92, 93, 96, 104, 122, 125, 150, 153; Army of Cumberland, 160, 165, 168, 169; at Chattanooga, 180
Thompson, Herbert A., 316

Index

Thornton, Sir Edward, 252
Travellor, 216, 217
Twain, Mark, 65, 106, 289; visit to Grant, 290; enthusiasm, 291; contract signed, 292; influence on Grant, 292; Grant's influence on, 292; account of Grant, 293, 296; visit to Grant, 300, 312

Vanderbilt, William H., 6, 8, 269, 274, 275
Vicksburg, 36, 61, 62, 78, 114; campaign, 66 ff.; seige, 75

Virginia Central Railroad, destroyed, 154

Wallace, General Lew, 52, 54 n., 154, 155
Wallace, W. H. L., 52
Ward, Ferdinand, 7, 8, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 293
Warren, General G. K., 125, 141, 197
Washburn, Colonel Francis, 209

Washburne, Elihu B., 34, 50, 63, 82, 113, 265, 267 n.
Washington, Treaty of, 249, 252
Webster, Colonel J. D., 42
Weldon Railroad, captured, 154
Welles, Gideon, diary of, 243 n.
Wellington, 55
West Point, 12, 29, 307, 308
Wilderness, The, 36
Wilderness, Battle of, 80, 123; begun, 125; course of, 127 ff., 170, 171, 172
Williams, Seth, 210
Wilson, James H., 68, 69, 83, 86, 96, 124, 126, 128, 129, 130, 141
Wilson, Woodrow, 263, 265
Whittier, Colonel Charles A., 211
Wood, Charles, 277, 278
Wood, Thomas J., 102, 104
Wright, General, 155, 204, 208

Yates, Governor, 30

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY



120 865

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY